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INTRODUCING: Nike's new shoe — just for T.O.

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Your essential daily news | WEEKEND, DECEMBER 4-6, 2015

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UGLY SITUATION TURNED BEAUTIFUL

KEITH GOSSE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Teen on top ten 'ugliest girls' list shuts down bullies with eloquent response

metroNEWS

City plans to get tough on parking

ENFORCEMENT

Tickets could soon be sent to drivers by mail

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Avoiding a parking ticket in Toronto is about to get a lot harder.

By the end of next year, the city's expected to be in the business of mailing tickets to parking scofflaws, including those who block bike lanes.

The plan — headed to city council in February — would prevent drivers from avoiding tickets by driving away when they're caught in the act.

A 2014 city report found three per cent of all parking tickets issued in Toronto were cancelled because the driver "moved along" before actually receiving the ticket. Based on city figures, that's a loss of about $3.3 million in revenue.

Under provincial law, parking enforcement officers must physically affix tickets to vehicles. That means drivers who hit the gas before the ticket is printed get away scot-free.

But, the city no longer has to follow the rule because Ontario has granted municipalities the option of handling more parking enforcement in-house instead of through provincial courts.

Among those most excited about the change are cycling advocates like Jared Kolb.

Kolb, director of Cycle Toronto, said being able to dole out a $150 fine to more people caught stopped in bike lanes will make streets safer.

"A lot of bike lanes are just paint on the road. And if the enforcement regime can't back up that painted line, it makes painted bike lanes places that can be unsafe for cyclists," he said, noting that cyclists must merge on to the roadway to avoid illegally parked cars.

In the wake of Mayor John Tory's announcement of a dedicated fund for transit and housing projects, Kolb said he would like to see some revenue from parking tickets set aside for cycling infrastructure and maintenance.

3%

A 2014 report found three per cent of parking tickets were nullified due to drivers escaping the scene before getting a ticket.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

San Bernardino grieves as more details revealed after mass shooting. **World**

SAMARA CANADA

City accessibility advocate honoured

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

One of Toronto's leading accessibility advocates is being honoured for his efforts at making the city barrier-free.

Luke Anderson suffered a spinal cord injury in 2001 while mountain biking. His experience navigating the city in a wheelchair led him to found StopGap, a non-profit that builds temporary ramps that allow those with disabilities to access businesses and other spaces in Toronto.

On Thursday, Anderson received Samara Canada's Everyday Political Citizen award, which recognizes Canadians who have made positive change in their communities.

"Samara's research shows that Canada requires a culture shift towards 'everyday democracy,'" said Samara's director Jane Hilderman. "The Everyday Political Citizens are role models for all Canadians."

Anderson was selected from over 300 nominees judged by a panel that included Rick Mercer and former cabinet minister John Baird.

"It was incredible to learn that I had been nominated. I was over the moon," Anderson told Metro.

"And to learn that I've won this, that I've been selected from among the 300 others who are doing incredible work, words can't describe how amazing I feel about this."

Other winners included Indigenous community organizer Cory Nicotine from Edmonton and Hana Woldeyes, a youth advocate in Vancouver.

After receiving the award at a ceremony Thursday in Toronto, Anderson stressed that StopGap's success is the result of the hard work of volunteers.

"A simple, brightly-painted ramp can make some serious change and raise awareness about the barriers that prevent many of us from accessing the spaces that we want to," he said.

StopGap founder Luke Anderson poses outside his downtown Toronto condo with some of the wheelchair ramps made by his organization. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

MALWARE

CRTC issues warrant to take down server

The CRTC has issued its first warrant under the federal government's anti-spam legislation to take down a Toronto-based malware server in an attempt to disrupt an international network of infected computers.

The move was part of a coordinated effort between Canadian authorities, overseas law enforcement including Interpol and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Microsoft Corp.

The CRTC said the Toronto server acted as a command-and-control point for the Win32/Dorkbot malware, a family of related computer worms that spread through USB keys and instant messaging services and can steal usernames and passwords by watching your online activity.

A computer infected with Dorkbot can also download other malware and compromise a system further.

Canada's telecoms regulator gained new powers over the Internet when Ottawa's anti-spam legislation came into effect in July 2014.

This is the first time the CRTC has used those powers to take down a server distributing malware on the Internet.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The new Air Max 1 sneakers from Nike are called The 6 and will hit the market on Dec. 6. COURTESY OF @JAYSCALE

Wearing city pride from head to shoe

NIKE

Shoe company releasing Toronto-themed line

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

It started with "Toronto vs. Everybody" T-shirts, and toques displaying local neighbourhood names.

Now, Nike wants you to rock Toronto's pride on your feet.

The giant shoemaker is launching its new line of Toronto-themed Air Max 1s, which it fittingly called The 6 in reference to Drake's popular nickname for the city.

The date of launch is – yeah, that's right – Sunday Dec. 6.

The sneakers have a thick white sole, a black leather body and a polished shoelace. There's a CN Tower sign inside, as well as "The 6" written in purple on the tongue.

The new product adds to the already growing market of city-themed clothing and merchandise. Companies such as Peace Collective and Neighbourhood Project already produce garments inscribed with words praising Toronto and its neighbourhoods.

The Tuck Shop Trading company has also introduced toques in various colours representing different local communities.

Toronto isn't the first city to receive a nod from Nike in its shoe production. New York, London, Los Angeles and Paris all have city-themed sneakers.

The hot commodity is expected to sell out fast. People have already started asking about them at Community54, one of the local stores where The 6 will hit shelves.

"I know people will sleep outside here overnight Saturday. Silly, right?" said Joel Reiloy, the shop owner.

"We're open at 8 a.m. and I'm sure by 8:30 they'll be gone."

Other local stores to score a pair of the sneakers include Lost and Found, Capsule Footwear, At Eaze, Nomad 431, Exclucity, Haven and Livestock.

A pair of The 6 will sell for $165, both online and in the stores.

Toronto now joins other iconic cities such as **New York and London** who also have city-themed sneakers made by Nike. COURTESY OF @JAYSCALE

Community Housing approves $543.2M budget

Councillor Gord Perks. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CITY HALL

Big tax question to come

The question at Toronto city hall is not whether council will approve Mayor John Tory's infrastructure fund, but what other levies will be approved along with a property tax surcharge.

Official recognition that Toronto has a revenue problem, after four years of staunch denial under Tory predecessor Rob Ford, has sparked debate over which levies, tolls and taxes are coming. Some options hit regular taxpayers in the wallet, while others are aimed at shopping mall owners, condo builders and hotel operators.

"The mayor's proposal will sail through council," predicts Gord Perks, Tory's prime council critic on budget matters. "The difficult debate will be setting the 2016 operating budget and coming up with a revenue tool that will really solve all our problems."

Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong, Tory's deputy mayor, known as a right-leaning penny pincher, is in rare agreement with Perks that $65 million to $70 million in extra annual property taxes will not make a dent in transit and housing infrastructure needs. Unfunded capital projects of all types total $23 billion. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE OPTIONS

Federal money
The Trudeau Liberal government was elected promising to double Canada's infrastructure funding for each of the next three years. Toronto's share for transit, social housing and infrastructure should total at least $1 billion a year.

Hotel room tax
Many cities collect either a per-room fee or a percentage of charges. A 1-percent surcharge on the 9.45 million rooms sold in 2014 would bring in about $14.2 million a year.

Slice of HST
1 per cent of the harmonized sales tax, either from or on top of the current 13 per cent. Based on population, Toronto should get at least $560 million a year.

TASK FORCE

But numbers include $13.7m request for improvements

Amid an outcry over transparency and millions needed in city subsidies, the board of Toronto Community Housing on Thursday hesitantly approved a requested $543.2-million operating budget for 2016.

But that "balanced" budget, presented by the managers of the largest public housing portfolio in Canada, includes an unapproved $13.7-million request to the city for needed improvements for tenants — specifically, changes recommended by Mayor John Tory's housing task force.

A day after Tory announced his plan to introduce a property tax levy to pay for better transit and housing, the board also learned that TCHC plans to dip into its reserves and draw on its line of credit to finance $93 million of the $432.3-million capital budget.

The board approved the request to the city, which totals $1.3 billion in combined operating and capital spending, on a 5-2 vote.

> **Toronto Community Housing exists to ensure that Torontonians can live in dignity. That must always include transparency, and the ability of residents to engage in the budget process.** Joe Cressy

Board member Catherine Wilkinson, who voted against it, said she couldn't support a process she said lacked transparency.

Board member Councillor Joe Cressy moved successfully that TCHC post a line-by-line breakdown of the budget, which was previously presented only behind closed doors. He also asked that those details be posted in advance of future budget debates.

When asked why a budget breakdown wasn't made publicly available, interim president and CEO Greg Spearn said that had not been the board's "normal practice" and that the details were presented at a board committee that does not meet publicly.

"We're more than happy to post line-by-line on the web, and we will," he said.

TCHC management said the corporation faces strong budget pressures in both capital and operating costs. The city already provides nearly $200 million in operating subsidies, which remains consistent for 2016. But the $13.7 million to fund new improvements would be in addition to that. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ROADS

Study recommends raising tolls for civic revenue

Even as politicians continue to bat away the idea of tolls, another study — the second in a month — suggests that charging drivers a modest user fee could help raise badly needed civic revenue, ease Toronto's crippling congestion and reduce smog.

A rush-hour toll of 21 cents per kilometre the length of the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway could raise $513 million a year for Toronto, says a report published by the Pembina Institute.

The study appears on the environmental think tank's website just as Toronto's mayor and city manager are talking about new taxes and tools to raise money for housing and transit.

The Pembina report recommends a staged approach to tolling, one that would eventually incorporate provincial highways as the region's rapid transit expansion comes online.

It envisions a starting rush-hour toll of 14 cents a km that would raise $487 million annually. Then, in Phase 2 in 2025, the rate would rise to 21 cents a km in rush hours, generating $513 million a year. The tolls would be lower in off-peak hours.

In the third and final phase, in 2031, tolls to the 400 series highways would raise an additional $2.5 billion, says the report. By then, the GO system would be electrified and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and Spadina subway extension to York Region would be running.

Written by Cherise Burda, now with the Ryerson City Building Institute, and B.C. economist Lorie Srivastava, the Pembina report also quantifies the environmental, safety and health benefits of reduced congestion resulting from road pricing.

Toll revenue could be invested in rebuilding infrastructure such as the east end of the Gardiner.

But where governments invest depends on the policy's objectives, said Pembina's Ontario director.

"If you're putting in some form of road pricing, are you doing it to cover the infrastructure costs? Are you doing it to get an environmental benefit?" said Eli Angen. "If your goal is to reduce congestion and move around the city better, it should be invested in transit infrastructure." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto commuters battle traffic and congestion as they crawl up the **Don Valley Parkway** looking North from the Gerrard Street bridge on Nov. 16. RANDY RISLING/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TOLLING TACTICS

Reduced traffic (per day)
Congestion would decline considerably under Pembina's tolling scenario. Drivers would have more transit options with SmartTrack, and electrified Kitchener and Stouffville GO lines.

Shorter round trips
Time savings estimates are calculated using a minutes-per-kilometre travel time contained in a Conference Board of Canada study of Highway 407 ETR. It takes into account a number of factors including the number of drivers who would switch to transit, change their route or change their journey departure time based on having to pay a toll.

Time is money
The cost of time saved is based on a projected 2025 hourly wage of $38 an hour in peak commuting times and $15.20 an hour for non-rush periods. Although commuting times probably don't translate to in-pocket savings for most people, it is one way of putting value on time.

Lower cost of driving
These savings are based on the Canadian Automobile Association's assumption that it costs 54 cents a km to operate a mid-sized car. It includes gas and insurance.

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Judge actions, not hijab: Campaign

DISCRIMINATION

#JeSuisHijabi challenges assumptions

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Saadia Mahdi would like to be seen as who she really is: an IT consultant whose family firm, Maplenet Solutions Inc., provides technology services across the GTA.

Instead, she says, many people see her through the lens of what she's wearing.

"I don't really understand it," said Mahdi, an active Member of the Muslim community in Vaughan. Wearing a hijab makes people think of her as un-Canadian, she said.

"Sometimes the way some people look at you, I feel like if I don't open my mouth first they will presume I don't even speak English," she said.

Mahdi and dozens of other Muslim women across the country are out to change that perception. In a campaign they called #JeSuisHijabi, they are determined to let Canadians know Muslim women are helping build the country, she said.

"We are working, volunteering, studying in universities and totally invested in Canada," she said.

> **We are working, volunteering and totally invested in Canada.**
> Saadia Mahdi

The campaign will look to open a dialogue in communities to dispel false impressions about Islam as a religion and the wearing of a hijab. There will be organized events at mosques and community centres, welcoming anyone. Some university groups are even organizing "try on a hijab booths"

The campaign follows a series of incidents in Toronto and across Canada, in which women were verbally and physically abused in apparent acts of Islamophobia.

Mahdi gives the example of a Toronto woman attacked at a local school: "She was just picking up her kids from school, like any other parent. The only difference was the hijab she was wearing."

Saadia Mahdi, one of the organizers. CONTRIBUTED

IN BRIEF

OPP officer cleared of responsibility in drowning

An OPP officer was not responsible for the drowning death of a woman in Lake Huron in November, Ontario's Special Investigations Unit said in statement on Thursday.

According to the SIU investigation, the woman left her family cottage that afternoon and walked along the beach. When she didn't return within an hour, her family went to look for her. She was spotted in the lake, and the family called 911. An officer in full uniform and a family member tried going into the water arm-in-arm, but couldn't reach the woman.

The SIU investigation concluded that the officer who had gone into the lake was well-intentioned.

An SIU investigation is triggered every time police are involved in an incident where someone dies, is seriously injured or alleges sexual assault.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

GO-ing up: Commute cost

Most GO riders will pay between 40 and 60 cents more per ride starting Feb. 1. One bright spot for commuters is that the Presto card discount is increasing from 10 per cent to 11.15 per cent.

The higher prices will generate another $24.1 million for GO annually. That money will pay for more service and facilities such as parking, said GO president Greg Percy.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bruce Power on hook for updating reactors

Privately owned Bruce Power will invest $13 billion to refurbish the world's largest nuclear station.

In a first for Ontario, the company will assume all the financial risk from any cost overruns in the overhaul of six of Bruce's eight reactors on Lake Huron that is to begin in 2020.

"The agreement makes 23,000 jobs possible and supports an estimated $6.3 billion in annual, local economic development," Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli said Thursday.

"These actions will save the electricity system $1.7 billion and provide important relief for electricity consumers," said Chiarelli.

"All of the risk, basically, of operations and what the impact might be are on Bruce — we pay for the power that we receive and not anything else," he said.

Bruce Power nuclear generating station in Kincardine, Ont.
J.P. MOCZULSKI /THE CANADIAN PRESS

No public money will go into the Bruce refurbishment, but the company will earn a premium for the power it sells to the system.

If the 15-year overhaul comes in under budget the savings will be split between the company and hydro ratepayers. But cost overruns — which are the norm on Candu reactor projects — would be Bruce's problem alone.

Bruce Power president and CEO Duncan Hawthorne stressed "we are 100 per cent accountable for over-budget or late — no ambiguity."

The announcement is the first phase of updating Ontario's aging nuclear fleet, which supplies two-thirds of the province's electricity. Bruce, which accounts for 30 per cent of Ontario's power generation, is slated to be in operation until the 2060s.

Jack Gibbons, chair of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, noted the $13-billion figure is a "preliminary" cost estimate.

"According to the contract, the final cost estimate is to be determined at a later date. Unfortunately for consumers, the price we pay will be based on the final cost estimate, not the preliminary one," said Gibbons.

The nuclear announcement comes as the Ontario government is scrambling to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

The Independent Electricity System Operator calculates that within a decade Ontario will only rely upon emissions-free nuclear power for 41 per cent of the province's electricity production. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The Empire hypes back

Here's where Toronto fans can get up close and personal with some of the characters in the new Star Wars film

Colin McNeil
Metro | Toronto

There's been an awakening on Queen Street.

A Star Wars: The Force Awakens pop-up exhibit has landed at 277 Queen St. W., providing fans with a tactile preview of the upcoming film before its Dec. 18 release.

The one-room display features life-size replicas of some of the new characters to the Star Wars canon and a photo-op with BB-8 — the franchise's newest droid.

Entry is free, though you might want to fire up the old snowspeeder sooner rather than later — the exhibit departs for a galaxy far, far away on Dec. 21. Here, it's open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Although similar exhibits exist in Paris, London, Berlin — and Coruscant — the Queen Street location is the only place in North America you can see authentic life-size statues like these, or get the tees.

Throughout the exhibit's 16-day run, special guests and theme days will be announced via @DisneyStudiosCA.

If you've got young padawans in tow, it's family day on Sunday. If you're Sith-inclined, Dark Side Day, which features lightsaber giveaways, might be for you.

Metro delves into the people, hype and love that make up Star Wars fandom.

MALLORY CHATE/FOR METRO

LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

MALLORY CHATE/FOR METRO

Meet the new crew

The main attractions at the pop-up exhibit are the five life-size character replicas. New additions to the Star Wars world Captain Phasma, BB-8 the droid, Sith Lord Kylo Ren, Rey and a new model storm trooper are here for your inspection. They were created by Prop Shop in London, U.K., the same company that made the props for the film.

Who's scruffy looking?

If you're a collector looking for something unique, the exhibit is selling two T-shirts that aren't available anywhere else. They say "The Toronto Exhibit" on the back, marking you as a diehard fan from Hogtown.

CONTRIBUTED

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MEMORIAL

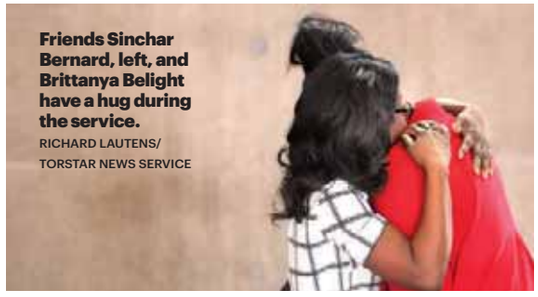
Classmates remember Simone Reid

Through tears and bewildered sorrow, friends and classmates assembled at Centennial College on Thursday to remember Simone "Shanni" Reid, an 18-year-old student who was found dead last month in what police are treating as a homicide. Reid, who grew up in Jamaica and finished high school in Toronto, was enrolled in the police foundations program at the east-end college.

Reid was found not breathing, with obvious signs of trauma, and pronounced dead in a Scarborough apartment on Nov. 13. Her father, Winston "Paul" Reid, was found dead, too — lifeless inside his blue Toyota Sienna, which was parked in Markham.

Speakers from Centennial and the Jamaica Advocacy Club, which arranged the event, addressed the assembly from a glass podium.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Friends Sinchar Bernard, left, and Brittanya Belight have a hug during the service.
RICHARD LAUTENS/ TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Home sales set a record

REAL ESTATE

96,401 total transactions beat numbers from 2007

More than 100,000 homes are expected to change hands by the end of this year as house hunters — backed by low interest rates and bolstered by fears that prices are climbing further out of reach — continued their frantic buying spree in November.

Last month was a record November for home sales and catapulted the region to a new annual sales record, with a month to go before 2015 is even over.

Some 7,385 houses and high-rise condos changed hands in November, up 14 per cent year over year, according to figures released by the Toronto Real Estate Board Thursday.

The average sale price of a home — standalone houses and condos combined — climbed to $632,685 in November, up 9.6 per cent from a year earlier, says TREB. The MLS composite benchmark price, which factors out sales at the extreme ends of the spectrum, climbed by 10.3 per cent.

November's strong showing brought total transactions for the year to 96,401 houses and condos, beating the previous record of 93,193 for all of 2007, set before the recession knocked the steam out of Canada's real estate market.

Since then, it's been an unrelenting climb back, with bidding wars and bully bids now almost a given for standalone houses — and even some condos — across the sought-after City of Toronto and booming regions within a relatively easy commute to the core, such as York and Durham.

"Demand for ownership housing has remained strong in the GTA throughout 2015, with sales generally increasing at a greater annual rate compared to new listings," said Jason Mercer, TREB's director of market analysis.

"This means that competition between buyers has strengthened in many neighbourhoods in the City of Toronto and surrounding regions. The end result has been upward pressure on home prices well above the rate of inflation in most cases."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PRICES BY THE NUMBERS

DETACHED:
Average as of Nov. 2007:
416 region: $618,838
905 regions: $436,497
Average as of Nov. 2015:
416 region: $1,018,621
905 regions: $762,326

TOWNHOUSES:
Average as of Nov. 2007:
416 region: $355,826
905 regions: $275,424
Average as of Nov. 2015:
416 region: $549,649
905 regions: $460,274

CONDO APARTMENTS:
Average as of Nov. 2007:
416 region: $296,911
905 regions: $212,051
Average as of Nov. 2015:
416 region: $415,316
905 regions: $315,223

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Hands-on demonstration at library

3D PRINTING

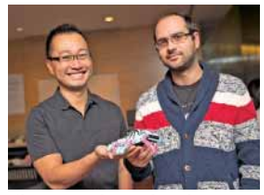
Handathon will help give prosthetics to kids worldwide

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Canada's first ever "handathon" is happening this weekend, as schoolchildren in Toronto gather to lend a helping hand to disabled children around the world.

Students from Jackman elementary school and Jarvis Collegiate will be building prosthetic hands using 3-D printed materials at the Toronto Public Library's reference branch on Saturday.

"We want to put 3-D printing into a broader context," said Ab Velasco of the Toronto Public Library. "A lot of people use the technology for prototyping, but this event shows that it can also be used to fulfill a social good."



Library workers Ab Velasco, left, and Alex Dimitrov with one of the hands. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

The hands will be collected and distributed to children who need them by Enabling the Future, a U.S. organization that helps make, collect and distribute prosthetics. Launched in 2013, the group claims to have matched 1,500 hands with recipients across the globe.

According to Kolden Simmonds, Canadian ambassador for Enabling the Future, 3-D printed prosthetics can be produced for less than $50, making them far more accessible than traditional prosthetics.

"Children in third-world countries can't necessarily afford a prosthetic. You have to cast it and mould it and replace it a number of times as the child grows. It's a very costly endeavour," he said.

Enabling the Future's designs are also more functional, Simmonds said, and can be used to lift and grasp things. And with the flexibility of 3-D printing, he noted that children can build specific hands for specific tasks.

The event is open to the public, but Velasco said only the schoolchildren will be assembling the hands.

He also stressed that the event is focused more on learning and process than producing a finished product.

*Based on a direct comparison of Meridian's featured Good To Grow High Interest Savings Account against the competition's posted rates for balances at $5,000 for the most comparable offering posted online on their respective websites, as of December 2, 2015. 1.50% interest is calculated on the closing daily balance and is paid monthly. The rate shown is on an annualized basis and is subject to change without notice. ™Trademarks of Meridian Credit Union Limited. 12/2015

Lynelle Cantwell is getting support and thousands of positive messages for turning the tables on online bullies. PAUL DALY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

INSPIRATION

Teen prevails over ugliness of bullying

Lynelle Cantwell had just sat down in Grade 12 math class at Holy Trinity Regional High School in the Newfoundland and Labrador town of Torbay one morning this week when cruelty rocked her world.

Two friends sitting next to the 17-year-old were talking about a posting on the website ask.fm.

"They were talking about these polls," she told Torstar News Service Thursday. "There was one for the prettiest girls in Grade 12 and one for the ugliest."

Her friends showed Lynelle the site on their phones and she saw "that I was in fourth place.

"It hurt. A lot. I'm not going to lie. It kind of tore me up inside a little bit."

> **It hurt. A lot. I'm not going to lie.**
> Lynelle Cantwell

Lynelle didn't think much more about math or any other subject for the next little while.

"I kind of just zoned out," she remembered."So I decided to sit down and think about it and breathe."

She wrote to whoever had come up with the poll that she "was sorry that you don't get to know me as a person....But I'm sorry for you. Not myself. I'm funny, nice, kind, down to earth, not judgmental, accepting, helpful and I'm super easy to talk to. That's the same for every other girl on that list."

The reaction, she told the Star, was overwhelming.

"I didn't think it was going to go viral!"

Almost as soon as she posted her message, reaction started. "As soon as I clicked send, it wasn't two seconds after. I laid my phone down... and it just started buzzing."

For Lynelle, the intended slight had the unintended consequence of letting her set a powerful example for others, and in letting the country know just how beautiful a human being she is.

"I am really proud of myself, I'm not going to lie," she said. "I've always wanted to do something to change something in the world.

"I always told my mom and my dad when I was younger, I want to do something for people."

Looks like she has. Beautifully.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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66% Spike In Recent Foreclosures Plus Aging Baby Boomers Downsizing Creating Discounted Property Frenzy In U.S.

New Real Estate Bonanza

Right now while you are reading this, hedge funds are buying U.S. property in mass. Foreign nationals are loading up on houses as fast as they can. Some savvy individuals are snapping up housing in the U.S. like never before.

In October, *Reuters* reported private investment firm Starwood Capital Group got in the game. They purchased 23,262 mid-rise and garden-style apartments for a whopping $5.37 billion. Other hedge funds are buying entire subdivisions under construction.

The Chinese are the number one overseas investors of U.S. real estate. Often they will buy 10 condos at once, sight unseen.

Does all this investment activity show the U.S. headed for another property bubble? The answer is no.

Demographics are driving demand for rental property to heights unseen in American history. *Bloomberg Business* says rents are only going higher.

The Millennials saddled with student debt, are choosing to rent. Others want to live in cities and avoid long commutes home ownership often demands.

One of the fastest growing demographic segments in the U.S. is those over age 65. Their downsizing activity is flooding the market with discounted property.

Foreclosures, Flips & Flowing Money

Foreclosures clogged in the U.S. courts are now surging. Those that know how are gaining windfalls of opportunity for flips or portfolio growth.

Yet individual investors are asking, "Can I still find good deals in U.S. property?" The answer is an emphatic YES.

Warren Buffet told CNBC he would buy a couple hundred thousand single family homes if he could.

Real estate investors on the Turnkey Trainings team know the right way to buy property. No matter what the economy is doing. Using their proprietary techniques, you too can find screaming bargains in the U.S.

They will reveal these breakthrough strategies at the FREE events in the Toronto area. When you attend you'll see many successful current and former and students who made a bundle in U.S. real estate.

The Vancouver couple pictured here, were able to buy an entire trailer park in Florida for half off. Their investment brings them a 23% net annual return on their money. Would you like these types of returns?

Another Canadian couple found and flipped a property in 2 weeks to pocket a cool $40,000! Imagine if you could do that just a couple of times a year.

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- How to get funding for your deals, so you never have to tie up your own money or use your credit! We'll give you a free funding certificate just for attending!
- How to beat the house flipping wizards by becoming a wholesaler to hedge funds
- New zero money down strategies! News to you no matter how many real estate seminars you may have attended!
- How to close property deals over the phone in 9 minutes or less

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These breakthrough strategies have closed 12,000 property deals in the last 15 years...

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IN BRIEF

Regan is new Speaker of House of Commons

MPs have elected Liberal Geoff Regan as Speaker of the House of Commons.

Regan, 56, who represents the riding of Halifax West, was first elected in 1993, defeated in 1997 and then re-elected in 2000, and has served as MP ever since.

He defeated fellow Liberals Denis Paradis and Yasmin Ratansi and Conservative Bruce Stanton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ordinary Canadians can now be a senator

Ordinary Canadians will be able to apply for an appointment to the Red Chamber under the Liberal government's new appointment process.

The government announced Thursday it's establishing a five-member advisory board to recommend Senate appointees "guided by public, merit-based criteria," a system the Liberals say will make the Senate less partisan and more effective. MICHAEL WOODS/METRO

Extension on assisted suicide deadline sought

Canada's attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould is asking the Supreme Court of Canada for a six-month extension on the February deadline to craft laws to govern assisted suicide.

She is also asking that any opposing party be required to respond within three days, instead of the traditional 10-day window.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian sponsors give refugees hope for world

IMMIGRATION

Paperwork and waiting precede trip out of Jordan

The Alhajalis are animated, talking over one another as they compare the prosperous and peaceful pre-revolution life they enjoyed in Syria to the daily struggles they now face as 10 of the 630,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Even though they're heading soon to the safety of Canada, the fear of Syria still hovers.

"All we want," says Razan, 28, wife of Emad, also 28, "is some peace and some security."

In a matter of days, they hope to be on their way there — Razan and Emad's family is among the 10,000 privately sponsored Syrian refugees likely to be in Canada by year's end as part of the Liberal government's commitment to resettle 25,000 of them by the end of February.

Awad Alhajali, 34, and his wife Asmaa, 34, are eventually bound for Canada as well, having found their own private sponsors in the same community — Orangeville, Ont.

About 14 months ago, a Canadian friend of a friend of Razan and Emad pointed out the private sponsorship system and offered to help with the paperwork.

> **The general situation here is nobody likes to help.**
> Refugee Emad Alhajali

A connection was made eventually with a group from Westminster United Church in Orangeville, Ont., hoping to sponsor a family. The paperwork was filled out, and then the waiting began.

A month ago, they were called for their health exams, and they have handed over their passports for what they believe are exit visas.

Now they await the phone call telling them when their flight will depart for Canada.

They've heard Canadians are warm and welcoming, and don't fear moving to a different culture.

"It's a surprise when people across the world want to help you," Emad says.

"It means the world is going to be OK," adds Razan.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ON THEIR WAY

Syrian family to head to Orangeville Dec. 14

Brian and Philomena Logel are making arrangements to welcome the Alhajalis into their own home, if only until a more permanent home is found for their Syrian charges. Word came down Sunday that the Alhajalis had received their exit visas and now they're heading to Orangeville, Ont., on Dec. 14.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

LEFT: Syrian refugee Awad Alhajali from Kherbet Ghazalah, Syria, and his wife Asmaa sit with their children, Obaida, 5, Adnan, 9, Abedr, 2, and Obada, 7, left to right, in their apartment in Irbid, Jordan. The family is waiting for approval to immigrate to Canada. RIGHT: Headwaters Refugee Group chair Brian Logel with his wife Philomela at the Westminster United Church, in Orangeville, Ont. LEFT: CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS; RIGHT: PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Gunman met radicals online

MASS SHOOTING

Motives of San Bernardino attackers are still unclear

San Bernardino gunman Syed Rizwan Farook had been in contact with known extremists on social media, a U.S. intelligence official said Thursday, and police said he and his wife had enough bullets and bombs to slaughter hundreds when they launched their deadly attack on a holiday party.

The details came to light as investigators tried to determine whether the rampage that left 14 people dead was terrorism, a workplace grudge or some combination.

The husband-and-wife killers were not on the FBI's radar before the massacre, said a second U.S. official, who likewise spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the investigation.

Wearing black tactical gear and wielding assault rifles, Farook, a 28-year-old county restaurant inspector, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 27, sprayed as many as 75 rounds into a room at a social service centre for the disabled.

Farook's co-workers had gathered there for a holiday banquet Wednesday.

Farook had attended the event but slipped out at some point.

He returned in battle dress.

Four hours later and two miles away, the couple died in a furious gunbattle in which they fired 76 rounds, while 23 law officers unleashed about 380, police said.

The couple left behind three rigged-together pipe bombs with a remote-control detonating device that apparently malfunctioned, and they had more than 1,600 rounds of ammunition left when police killed them in their rented SUV, Burguan said.

"We don't know if this was workplace rage or something larger or both," Attorney General Loretta Lynch said in Washington.

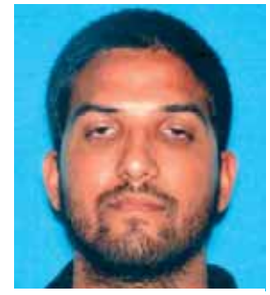
A U.S. official says the FBI was treating the mass shooting in California as a potential act of terror but had reached no conclusion it was.

Investigators are trying to determine whether Farook became radicalized and, if so, how, and whether he was in contact with any foreign terrorist organization, said the U.S. intelligence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

But the official said Farook had been in touch on social media with extremists who were under FBI scrutiny.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FBI agents search outside a home in connection to the shootings in San Bernardino.
RINGO H.W. CHIU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



This photo shows suspect Syed Rizwan Farook.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CROWDFUNDING

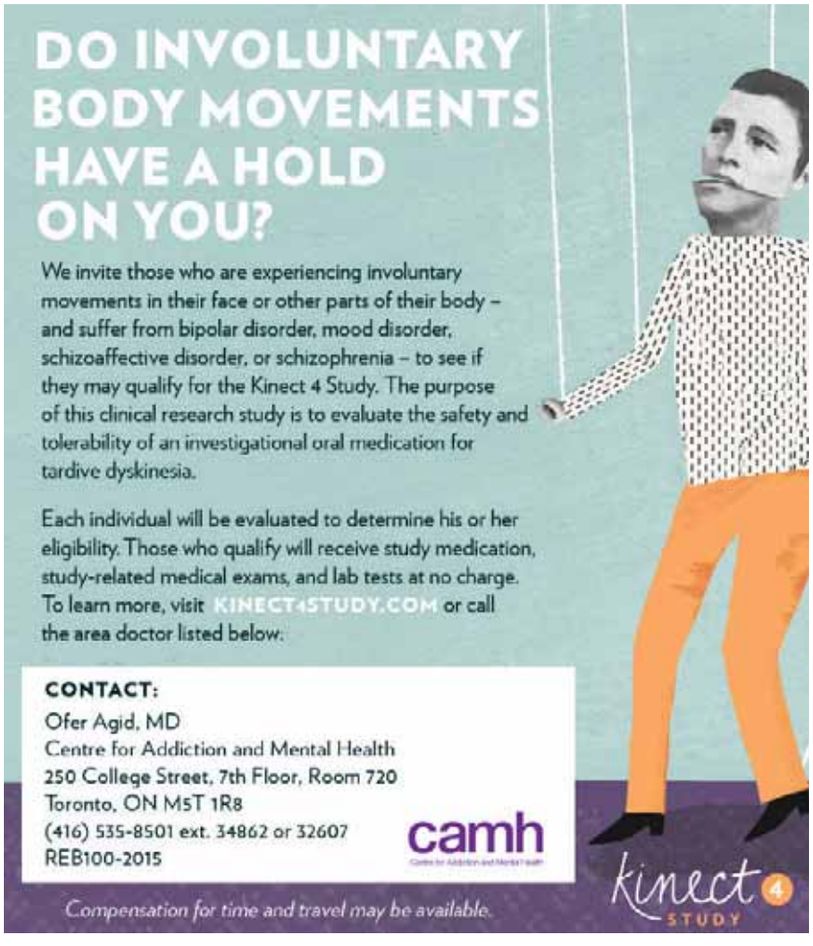
Refugee goes viral

Abdul Halim al-Attar, a refugee from Syria who was photographed selling pens in the streets of Beirut, is now running three businesses in the city after an online crowdfunding campaign in his name collected $191,000.

The 33-year-old father of two opened a bakery two months ago and has since added a kebab shop and a small restaurant to his business venture. He employs 16 Syrian refugees. The photograph of al-Attar carrying his sleeping daughter on his shoulder while trying to sell pens to passing motorists in the scorching heat went viral this past summer and touched people across the world.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adbul Halim al-Attar with his daughter. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Anger builds in U.S. over empty gestures

It's a natural reaction in times of grief: Politicians from both parties offered supportive thoughts and prayers for those killed in the San Bernardino shootings. But within hours, social media was awash with pushback from gun control advocates calling out those who offer prayers without pushing for tighter gun laws.

"Your 'thoughts' should be about steps to take to stop this carnage," Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut tweeted. "Your 'prayers' should be for forgiveness if you do nothing — again."

As GOP presidential candidates and conservative lawmakers tweeted, one by one, their prayers after the shooting, Igor Volsky, a contributing editor at the liberal website Think-Progress, started tweeting back how much each had received in campaign contributions from the National Rifle Association, which opposes tighter gun laws.

Volsky said in an interview that his Twitter campaign stemmed from frustration with those who "routinely talk about all the thoughts and prayers they're going to send to victims, and yet they do nothing time and time again in terms of actually reducing these things from happening."

The hashtag #thoughtsandprayers was adopted by those venting frustration with the sentiments. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Juan Carlos Mendez gathers a group of pastors for a prayer vigil. DAILY PRESS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

ISIL defeated in 'months' with peace strategy : Kerry
The Islamic State can be defeated within "months" of a ceasefire between Syria's government and moderate rebels, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Thursday, urging the world to come together behind a peace strategy recently hashed out by the United States, Russia and other countries. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris fugitive hid in wave of migrants: Hungary police
Salah Abdeslam, a fugitive suspected in the deadly attacks in Paris, was at the main Budapest train station before mid-September and left with men who had been travelling amid a wave of asylum-seekers trying to enter Europe, Hungarian officials said.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. military to open all combat jobs to women
After three years of study and debate, Defence Secretary Ash Carter ordered the military Thursday to open all military jobs to women, removing the final barriers that kept women from serving in combat, including the most dangerous and grueling commando posts.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Black babies' lives matter

Tiara Hardy, 22, credits Blanket of Love classes with helping her bond with her kids. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

UNITED STATES

Experts believe racism a cause of high infant mortality

There are a whole lot of baby funerals in Milwaukee. At most of them, it is a black mom crying over the casket.

Milwaukee is one of the most segregated cities in America. Its white infants die at around the same rate as infants in Canada. Its black infants die at around the same rate as infants in the Gaza Strip.

"Babies just dying every day," said Mary Love, 25 and expecting her third child, at the popular Blanket of Love prenatal class held weekly at a black church.

The city's politicians and experts believe they know what is happening. The challenge is fixing it. Four years into an ambitious official campaign to both lower the overall death rate and close the black/white gap, the overall rate has dropped slightly. The 10-point gap hasn't budged.

"This problem is so all-encompassing it's mind-boggling," said Elizabeth Hill-Karbowski, director of women and infants outpatient services at the Wheaton Franciscan health system.

About 15 per cent of the city's black infant deaths are the result of unsafe sleep conditions — fixable stuff. But two thirds of the deaths are the result of premature birth. Prematurity is linked to obesity, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and a lack of prenatal health care, all of which are linked to social conditions. The city's black poverty rate, black unemployment rate and black incarceration rate are among the highest in the country.

Across the U.S., the black infant mortality rate is nearly double the white rate. The gap can't be explained in full by poverty or risky decisions: even high-income, college-educated black women are more likely to give birth prematurely than the average white woman. Some researchers, and many of Milwaukee's experts, believe racism is part of the explanation.

Early labour can be triggered by high levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Studies show these levels are higher in people who have faced discrimination, no matter what their social status.

In Milwaukee, a community with deep and long-running racial divisions, Hill-Karbowski said chronic stress is the "overarching" factor in the mortality crisis.

"You're looking at generations upon generations of people who have been unfairly treated and discriminated against," she said. "We're talking about generations of people living with increased levels of stress hormones in their body." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Social worker Sara Nelson teaches mothers how to put their babies to sleep safely. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORTALITY

Harsh numbers tell story

15:5

ratio of black babies' deaths to white babies' death per 1,000 births in Milwaukee.

2/3

proportion of black babies' deaths in the city resulting from premature births

2:1

ratio of black babies deaths to white babies' deaths across the U.S.

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Weekend, December 4-6, 2015

FACE OFF

Is the TPP good for Canadian music?

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), is a mammoth 6,000-page trade agreement among 12 nations, including Canada, the United States, Australia and Japan. It covers everything you could conceivably trade — from donkeys to dairy to Disney's Mickey Mouse. As the new Parliament prepares to assemble for the first time, reviewing this thing and debating whether to ratify it will be a top priority.

ISTOCK

Especially controversial are the provisions that deal with Canadian culture (music, movies, books and more). Under the TPP, copyrighted works will enter the public domain — where they can be freely modified, published and shared — 70 years after the creator's death, rather than the current 50 years. So with the agreement, copyright holders, whether the artists themselves, their heirs or the companies that own the rights to their work, will be able to profit for 20 extra years.

Will this safeguard the rights of music-makers, who are struggling to stay afloat in the digital world? Or will it stifle Canadian creativity? Three experts weigh in.

DEADMAU5
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Expert comments have been condensed by Metro

No: It will hurt Canadian heritage

Michael Geist
University of Ottawa
Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law

It's largely the music companies, and artists' heirs, that benefit from an extension of copyright protection. To the average Canadian creator, it doesn't mean very much. Economists say a longer copyright term has little to no effect on new creativity. Nobody woke up and said, "I'm not going to write the next great Canadian novel, because my heirs will get 50 years of profits rather than 70." A term of the life of the author plus 70 years means many works that are around today won't be public domain until the next century. For the vast majority of works, the commercial value runs its course in far less time. We're restricting Canadians' access to their own heritage. But if older works are made publicly available and free, we can leverage the public domain for education and to promote Canadian heritage. I'd like to see a registration system, where you have to renew copyright every 20 to 25 years. It would separate the high-value commercial items from the vast majority. Imagine if we were still paying the heirs of Shakespeare, and charging for the rights to adapt it, to put on the plays. There wouldn't be that incentive to create.

Yes: it will help the music industry survive

Robert Hutton
Executive Director
Canadian Music Publishers Association

Very often, Canadian artists punch above their weight internationally. And we were considered a weak copyright jurisdiction. We have to realize that intellectual property is intangible. It's not a physical product like a compact disc anymore; it flows freely across borders. It has to be globally managed. So uniformity of international copyright standards is a good thing in itself. The companies that own artistic works have invested in the artists over a period of time. The Canadian public benefits because companies use that money to invest in developing new talent. Composers and families continue to reap the benefits of copyrighted works. When we extend protection, we help preserve a declining revenue stream. If you really value Canadian music and want it to be made in the future, we need to find a way for artists to get sustainable income. What happened with the TPP, from our perspective, is fair.

Sort of: A balance is needed

Erik Ashdown, CEO
Indiloop, a Canadian tech start-up that allows users to create and share their own music and sound mixes

I have to look at both sides of the copyright debate. We're not here to steal or disrespect copyrighted music, but you don't want to stop people from being creative. Record labels should see remixing as a marketing opportunity. If people are remixing your music, it shows that people care and you have an audience. When (Canadian house-music star) Deadmau5 was remixed by the (much more famous DJ) Skrillex, it probably brought a lot more attention to Deadmau5's work than it otherwise would have gotten. Some people think record labels are evil. They're not. They're in it because they love music. Their industry has been cut in half. They want to hold on to a few million dollars per year by holding on to copyright. People are still willing to pay for Beatles albums, and to pay to cover Beatles songs. On the other hand, I see why people say "Don't they have enough money?" I think Paul McCartney's great-great-grandkids will be okay.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Tackling violence against women: Where do we start?

I should be writing this column about violence against women, now.

It's just, violence against women — can you think of anything more broad? More pervasive? More global?

It's like saying, "Here's my opinion on poverty: It sucks."

Where do you start, and where to do you end? Rape as weapon of war, and, for ISIL, of indoctrination. Domestic abuse. Statistics, courtesy of the international development agency Plan Canada, that say 120 million girls have experienced forced intercourse or sexual touching, and females make up 70 per cent of human trafficking victims. Or: One-quarter of Canadian girls will experience sexual violence.

Sunday marks another National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women was Nov. 25th. Those who work year-round in this area worry about the tokenism of a day, while fighting for air-time to galvanize us to action.

Activists will seek to incite your indignation, though it's hard to get worked up over everyday injustices. Just ask a panhandler.

One place to start is with the good news, such as the federal Liberals' promise for a "comprehensive" gender-violence strategy and inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

"I think there's some new momentum that I'm quite optimistic about," Amanda Sussman, Plan Canada's head of policy and advocacy, told me. She pointed to the United Nation's new sustainable development goals for 2030, which are "drawing political attention and resources to the most vulnerable... adolescent girls, women and girls."

Another place to start is with the wider issues of violence, and how we need to end violence in men's lives, too. Undoing the pressure of gender norms on all people is among Plan's priorities, Sussman told me, painting the image of a man in a developing nation, living in extreme poverty, who must be the breadwinner for his family, but cannot.

"I think we have made mistake in the women's movement for some time not giving enough emphasis to that," she added.

Sussman, when we spoke, was sitting in the relative comfort of her Canadian life, fearing for the vulnerability of women and girl refugees, ripped away from their lives and protection.

"How do we spark the outrage?" she asked, and then suggested one last place to start: With ourselves. A day of action is a call to be "more vigilant than ever" in fighting the violence we witness. Individual actions count, she said. Maybe, start small.

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metro WEEKEND
Your essential daily news
MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION DIGITAL

In Legend, Tom Hardy plays identical twins and notorious gangsters Ronnie and Reginald Kray. HANDOUT

Tom Hardy is not your average guy

RETROSPECTIVE

Actor's small edgy roles deserve a double take

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Like Wrigley's "Double your pleasure! Double your fun!" gum, this weekend's movie Legend is two Tom Hardys in one. He plays the dual roles of Britain's most notorious gangsters, Ronnie and Reginald Kray, identical twins and violent thugs who ruled London's underworld during the 1950s and 1960s.

Previously real-life siblings Martin and Gary Kemp of '80s new wave band Spandau Ballet impersonated the brothers in the 1990 film The Krays, but these days special effects allow Hardy to play both brothers. "The movie's a testament to the Krays' ability to get away with everything, for a while, anyway," wrote Ty Burr in the Boston Globe. "But it's better evidence of Tom Hardy's ability to do just about anything."

Already this year we've seen the talented actor in the Mad Max reboot Fury Road, the musical London Road and the crime thriller Child 44. Soon he'll play opposite Leonardo DiCaprio in The Revenant and is currently shooting Taboo, a new BBC mini series scheduled to air next year.

He's also made waves as The Dark Knight Rises' brooding hulk Bane and dream-dancer Eames in the megahit Inception.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Legend	★★★
Youth	★★★★
A Royal Night Out	★★★
I Smile Back	★★★
Life	★★
Hitchcock/Truffaut	★★★★

HOW RATING WORKS
★★★★ SEE IT
★★★ WORTHWHILE
★★ UP TO YOU
★ SKIP IT

In between these box office busters he's appeared in smaller, edgier films that deserve a look. Here are some of the other films that have helped Tom Hardy become legend.

Hillbilly Hardy:
Lawless takes place during Prohibition. The bootlegging business is booming, run by hillbillies who'll sell to anyone with a buck and a thirst. The most notorious are the Bondurant family; headed by Forrest (Hardy) who engages in a knock down, drag out moonshine war with a corrupt lawman played by Guy Pearce. Hardy leads the cast as a soft-spoken thug with a brainy bent. "It's not the violence that sets men apart," he says, "it is the distance he is prepared to go."

When he isn't waxing philosophical he's busy earning most of the film's few laughs. It's a natural, unaffected performance that really shows what he can do without a mask strapped to his face.

Solo Hardy:
In these days of maximalist moviemaking Locke goes the opposite way, trimming the movie down to one claustrophobic setting and a single on-screen actor. Locke is the first movie in recent memory that would probably work as well as a radio drama as it does a film. Hardy is Ivan Locke, a straight arrow construction foreman determined to be at the birth of his child. In his car, he's battling traffic for the hour-and-a-half drive to London and the mother-to-be's hospital. Trouble is, the child is the result of a lonely one-night stand and he's a married man.

The entire film takes place in the front seat of Locke's car, in real time, as he drives the M1. We see through the windshield, into the backseat and the display screen of car phone and GPS. Most of all we see Hardy's face, which, even though obscured by a beard, still allows his charisma to ooze through. His face is the engine of the film, his talent the driver.

Hardheaded Hardy:
In the Drop, Hardy he plays Bob Saginowski, a mild mannered bartender at a Brooklyn neighbourhood pub owned by the Chechnyan mafia. Like many of the borough's bars, Marv's is sometimes used as a "drop," a place where gangsters secretly hide money until it is collected by their crime bosses.

As Bob, Hardy is a cypher; kind to dogs, shy and lovesick, he is an average neighbourhood guy. Except in this neighbourhood average guys have pasts, and Hardy does a nice job of playing a man who is trying to move on while the past tries to stop him in his tracks.

Sarah Gadon, left, and Bel Powley play the princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. HANDOUT

Gadon 'charmed' by teen Elizabeth

INTERVIEW

The Canadian actress hones a posh accent for royal role

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

For many of us Queen Elizabeth is a face on a stamp, someone we see every day on our money. For Sarah Gadon, the Canadian actress who plays H.R.H. in A Royal Night Out, the figurehead is "an icon and it is really always kind of difficult to humanize someone who is embalmed in icon status."

The Dracula Untold star plays the Queen before she took the throne, when she was a 20-year-old headstrong woman known to friends as Lillibet. It's May 8, 1945, VE Day in England, the biggest party London has ever seen and Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret (Bel Powley), or P1 and P2 as the princess sisters are called, want in on the action.

"For six years we've been cloistered," says Princess Elizabeth. "Like nuns," adds Princess Margaret.

"I fell in love so much with this script," says Gadon. "I was charmed by the story and its portrayal of her at that point in her life. It was this beautiful coming of age story about this woman faced with her future. That is something I really related to. That feeling of when you are growing up and you have all these ideas about the world, all these ideologies you are associated with and then you are confronted with reality and you have to decide for yourself what you want. I thought that was an interesting entry point."

The slick talking Liz manages to convince Mom (Emily Watson as the Queen Mum) and Dad (Rupert Everett as King George) to let them mingle with the real people, listen to the King's victory speech and report back.

Royal Night Out is part royal romcom, part urban adventure, and only loosely based on real events. In truth the princesses went out, accompanied by an entourage of 16 people and were home by curfew.

"Julian Jarrold, the director, was so conscious of what he wanted the tone of this film to be," says Gadon. "We all knew it wasn't a biopic, and none of us wanted to make that film. It is very much a fantasy, very much an adventure chase film. Being more North American in my approach to the part, my tendencies were to indulge the humour and indulge in the slapstick moments. Julian held the reins tight and really captured the reserve of Elizabeth. He really walked that line between going off too far in either direction. The film has very real feelings but a lot of tongue-in-cheek."

To capture Queen Elizabeth's posh accent Gadon studied footage of the princess at that age, the movies Roman Holiday and Brief Encounter and worked with dialect coach Brett Tyne. "Brett worked with all of us," she says. "It wasn't just me. She worked with Bel, Emily and Rupert because even though they're British they certainly don't walk around talking like that."

The dialogue coaching worked. A Royal Night Out is already open in England and Gadon notes, "The reviews were great, very generous. And most people had no idea I was Canadian! It was exciting for me.

"I was really, really nervous. To have it received so warmly was such a relief. Now, with the North American release, I'm like, 'I'm good! I got the stamp of approval from the Brits!'"

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DOCUMENTARY

Hitchcock/ Truffaut

Director: Kent Jones
Starring: David Fincher, Martin Scorsese

In 1962, Alfred Hitchcock and a 30-year-old François Truffaut sequestered themselves in a windowless Hollywood office for a weeklong conversation. The result: the seminal book Hitchcock/ Truffaut.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 96% Audience: 83%

COMEDY

Youth

Director: Paolo Sorrentino
Starring: Michael Caine, Harvey Keitel

Youth is about two longtime friends vacationing in the Swiss Alps. Michael Caine plays Fred, an acclaimed composer and conductor, who brings along his daughter (Rachel Weisz) and best friend Mick (Harvey Keitel), a renowned filmmaker.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 77% Audience: +92%

HORROR

Krampus

Director: Michael Dougherty
Starring: Toni Collette, Adam Scott

When his dysfunctional family clashes over the holidays, Max is disillusioned and turns his back on Christmas. Little does he know, this lack of festive spirit has unleashed the wrath of Krampus: a demonic force of ancient evil intent on punishing non-believers.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: NOT YET REVIEWED Audience: +93%

DRAMA

Life

Director: Anton Corbijn
Starring: Dane DeHaan, Robert Pattinson

This drama tells the story of photographer Dennis Stock who convinced a rebellious young actor on the cusp of stardom, James Dean to allow him to shoot him for LIFE Magazine.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 63% Audience: 56%

DRAMA

I Smile Back

Director: Adam Salky
Starring: Sarah Silverman, Josh Charles

Laney is a suburban wife and mother of two. She has the perfect husband, a pristine house, and a shiny SUV. However, just beneath the façade lie depression and disillusionment that send her careening into a secret world of reckless compulsion. Only real danger will force her to face the root of her destructiveness.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 56% Audience: 47%

DRAMA/COMEDY

Cold Deck

Director: Zack Bernbaum
Starring: Stéfano Gallo, Paul Sorvino

Stuck in a dead-end job that can barely pay for his mother's medical care, Bobby Locke's only escape is poker. His skills at the table are put to the test regularly at Scruples, a club run by an enigmatic father-figure. Fed up, Bobby decides to seize the opportunity that arises when he is invited to a secret high-roller game.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: NOT YET REVIEWED Audience: +50%

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Michael Caine reflects on a life in showbiz

PROFILE

From Youth to old age, actor opens up about career

Michael Caine sits down for lunch at the St. Regis Hotel in midtown New York clutching a copy of the day's Daily News given to him by the hotel doorman, who's earmarked a photo of Caine and his Youth co-star Jane Fonda.

"You wonder why I stay here," he chuckles. "I always remember the sort of joke thing in the British paper where the journalist said to the duchess, 'What's the best restaurant in London?' And she said, 'Where you're known, dear.' And I apply that to a lot of what I do."

Caine, 82, is known just about everywhere. Some know him as the star of British classics like Alfie, The Italian Job and Get Carter. Others know him as Batman's butler (and a regular of just about every Christopher Nolan movie). Some might even know him just by the ubiquitous impressions of his indelible cockney accent, like Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon's dueling Michael Caines in The Trip.

In Youth, Caine plays a retired classical composer and conductor alongside Paul Dano. CONTRIBUTED

In Paolo Sorrentino's Youth, Caine puts a capstone on a career that has travelled from working-class upstart to cinema institution. Like most things in life, he's enjoying it.

Working now and then, Caine lives relatively quietly, focused on his family; he and his wife, Shakira Baksh, are moving from their updated barn outside London, so their 25-minute drive to their grandchildren can be cut down to 5. But he's also soaking up the adulation for his aged classical composer in Youth, which some think could land him his sixth Oscar nomination.

"I've been nominated (for best actor) four times and I have never won," he says, smiling. "I fly for 11 hours to clap another actor and then go home. It's a long way! So I'm not exactly clearing shelves. I've got two Oscars, anyway."

Sorrentino, the Italian director of the Oscar-winning The Great Beauty, wanted Caine for his combination of authority and levity — a description that hits on Caine's unique blend of good cheer and gravitas. Caine first struck Sorrentino in Woody Allen's Hannah and her Sisters: "When I saw that, I thought: I would like to be like Michael Caine in life."

Wouldn't we all. Though Caine doesn't share his character's melancholy or regret he's similarly reflective — a two-time memoirist and an eager, colourful storyteller. "They say I'm a raconteur but what are you going to do?" he said. "There are stories to tell."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

QUOTE

"What am I going to do? Sit around and watch soaps on television all day? That's why I never retired."

Michael Caine

EARLY DAYS

On coming to Hollywood

"The first party I went to in Hollywood, Shirley MacLaine gave to welcome me to Hollywood. The first people to walk in were Gloria Swanson and Frank Sinatra. I was dumbstruck. Then she took me to dinner at Danny Kaye's house. There were only two other people there. One was Cary Grant and the other one was Prince Philip. I'm sitting there. I've been in Hollywood for three weeks. I took Shirley home. She lived in the Valley. As we got near to her home, I said, 'Look! Your house is on fire.' She said, 'Michael, that's steam from the pool.'"

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BIOPIC

James Dean has inspired lead since acting school days

When Dane DeHaan was studying acting at UNC School of the Arts he had a poster of James Dean on his dorm wall.

DeHaan graduated in 2008 and has gone on to star in the HBO series In Treatment, and films like Chronicle, The Place Beyond the Pines, Kill Your Darlings and The Amazing Spider-Man 2 but one thing hasn't changed.

"The poster is still on my wall," he says on the line from his home. "I'm looking at it right now."

In new film Life, the 29-year-old actor plays Dean in 1955, just months away from the release of East of Eden. After a chance meeting a photographer, played by Robert Pattinson, becomes convinced the actor is the perfect subject. The two have an undeniable bond but Dean is hesitant, leery of exposing himself to the publicity machine.

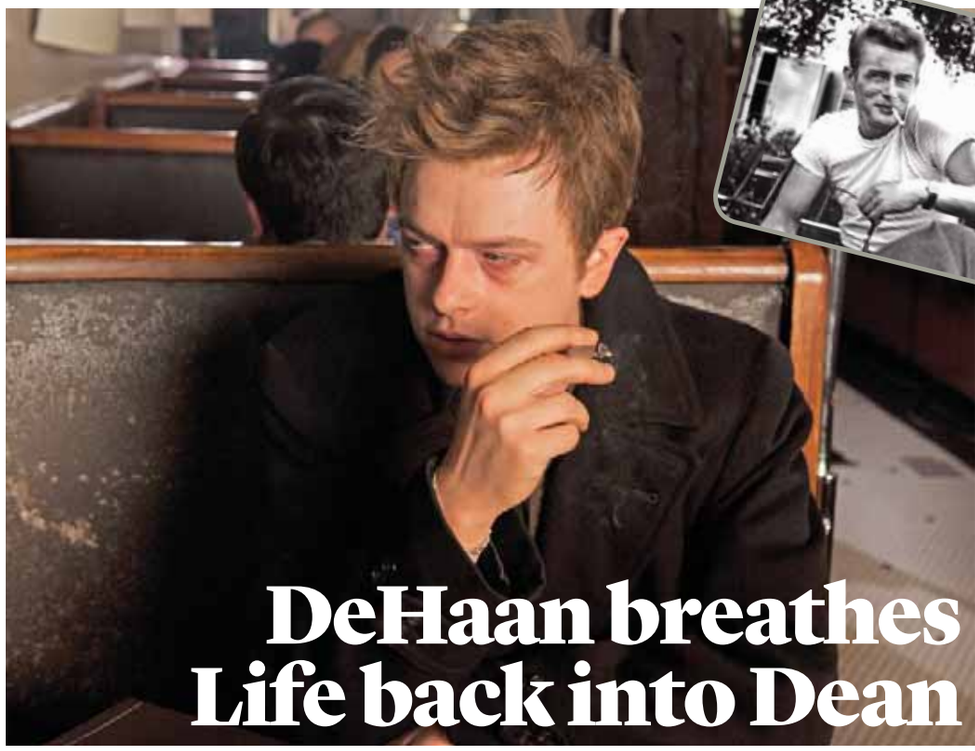
DeHaan, who gained 25 pounds to play the screen icon, calls Dean one of his favourite actors.

"I was learning about acting and my acting teacher told us to go home and watch Marlon Brando and James Dean movies. I started watching them and he was just amazing. It was amazing to watch someone start the revolution of the kind of acting that most people do today but do it in such a beautiful way.

"It's so exciting to watch those movies and see James Dean existing in this world with all these other over-the-top actors and just take them to school. The contrast was so jarring. Now you see a movie and there are obviously people who are better than others, but generally they're trying to do the same kind of acting. In those movies that's not really happening."

DeHaan, who will soon be seen playing another real life character, Karl Rove in Young Americans, says "people think they know a lot about Dean but not many people really know much about him at all," and hope Life will change that.

"Ultimately that was one of the reasons I took it on," he says. "I realized that there are a lot of young people who don't know who James Dean is, and that's a sad fact. I would hope you would watch his movies first and then watch our movie or watch our movie and then watch his. I hope it opens a door for a lot of people to rediscover him not just as a persona but as an amazing talent." RICHARD CROUSE/METRO



DeHaan breathes Life back into Dean

DEAN ONSCREEN

Dane DeHaan joins a long list of people who have played Dean since the icon's death in 1955.

James Franco became a star, and won a Golden Globe, playing the rebellious actor in the TV biopic James Dean. Franco got so into character he went from non-smoker to a two-pack-a-day habit — in real life Dean smoked more than two packs of unfiltered Chesterfields a day — and learned to ride a motorcycle.

In 1976, Stephen McHattie won praise playing Dean in the TV movie James Dean written by William Bast, Dean's best friend and roommate.

Also interesting is the video installation piece Rebel which features a female James Dean in the form of performer Nina Ljeti, and an Animaniacs episode featuring Slappy Squirrel giving Dean a class in method acting.

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Tom Hardy plays both twin gangster brothers Reggie and Ronnie Kray in Legend. HANDOUT

Hardy doesn't do anything by halves

LEGEND

Skyrocketing British star in another standout role

Legend, the gangster biopic opening Friday is the reason for this interview with Tom Hardy during TIFF in September. Along with The Revenant and Mad Max, it's further proof why Hardy is one of the hottest actors on the planet right now, garnering Oscar talk for all three of these 2015 releases.

Requiring him to play both twin brothers Reggie and Ronnie Kray, the gangster siblings who ruled the London underworld of the 1960s, it was a demanding shoot even for a man of Hardy's robust constitution.

Despite advances in film technology since Hayley Mills played twin sisters in The Parent Trap, Hardy, 38, was obliged to use the same split-screen technique employed for that 1961 movie.

He recorded dialogue for both psychotic Ronnie and slow-burning Reggie, using an earpiece to play it back and essentially talking to himself as he switched between brothers.

It was a risky procedure, one with a high potential for failure, but Hardy loves feeling like he's climbing "a metaphoric mountain or rock face," as he describes the twin challenges of Legend.

"If you're going to fail, fail big!" he says with a grin.

"Fail massively — and be judged!"

Critical consensus is that Hardy succeeds massively with his dual performance, despite any qualms about writer/director Brian Helgeland's episodic approach to the Kray saga.

Everybody and everything has flaws, Hardy continues, in art as in life.

He doesn't accept the notion that some people are totally good and others totally bad, since humans are capable of both.

The Krays did terrible things — a long list of convictions and incarcerations attest to that — but they weren't moustache-twirling villains from a cartoon.

"I don't buy into 'evil' ... There's something much more truthful about the human condition of having flaws and the capability to do absolutely anything in any given choice or moment or time when necessity prevails," Hardy says.

"If you alleviate that entire concept of human condition and say 'good' and 'bad,' you're left with a smorgasbord of no options."

He has played many terrifying individuals — including the brutal title strongman of Bronson, his 2008 breakthrough role, and super villain Bane from The Dark Knight Rises — but he views that as exploring dark personalities for dramatic effect.

"As I walk a day trip in their shoes, I say, 'Oh yeah, I wouldn't mind doing that for myself, but I won't do it today, because I'm going to be good, whatever 'good' is. Though 'good' is to me a bit of another wormhole of, well, 'What's behind the mask of your good balance?'

"Because underneath that there's frailty, vulnerability, anger issues, torment, abuse and sadness. Often there are tales of significant interest which are the counterpart to that which is light and presents itself as another side of good. So we're dealing with veneers ... and grey is a far more interesting colour than black and white."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ANOTHER TAKE

Perfect vanishing act

Legend writer/director Brian Helgeland, sitting in on the interview, marvels at how Hardy simply vanishes into the roles of both Kray siblings.

"There's no Tom in the movie. So you don't see Tom as Reggie and Tom as Ron ... Tom goes away and there's Reggie and Ron," he says.

Hardy appreciates the compliment but also wrestles with it.

"That's cool, but I can never say that. I always see me when I watch the work back ... You're going to see the edges. It's inevitable that you're going to fail at certain percentages. There's going to be collateral. It's a work in progress."

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Silverman on her serious movie role

I SMILE BACK

Actress got gig after sharing her experience with depression

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Whether it's Adam Sandler, Jim Carrey or even Oscar-winner Mo'Nique, people are shocked when they see their favourite comedians take on serious roles.

However, to cinema's latest crossover thespian, the two worlds go hand-in-hand.

"I don't think it's a new conceit that comedy and drama are adjacent at the very least," explained comedian Sarah Silverman recently.

In Toronto to discuss the debut of her new drama I Smile Back during the Toronto International Film Festival in September, the provocative entertainer agrees that behind comedy's veneer of laughter lies a rather shadowy secret of manic depression.

Indeed, a British study recently noted that humorists score higher for psychological traits like suicide and depression than the general public. Silverman adds, "I had a lot of stuff to draw from that a lot of comedians would."

With I Smile Back, Silverman is getting rave reviews for her riveting portrayal of a suburbanite mother struggling with such a spell of depression that she dulls her pain with drugs, alcohol and acts of compulsion at the risk of her family and health.

"I've never been purposely looking for anything (serious)," insisted Silverman, who admits the role was offered after author Amy Koppelman heard the comedian discussing her own battle with depression on Howard Stern's radio show.

"To be honest, I didn't think it would ever get made (so) I didn't think about it at all which was probably good because then it happened and it was too late to back out."

The truth is, she did take a leap of faith for the role — a decision that is now accruing such critical praise for Silverman as "chilling" and "scarily good."

If nothing else, I Smile Back definitely shows that comedian's fearlessness isn't just limited to the stage — illustrated by the film's prolonged scenes of stark emotional strife and unglamorous nudity.

"I was nervous about some of the sex scenes but (co-stars) Tommy Sadoski and Josh Charles were so — and I roll my eyes when I hear actors say this but now I get it — they were so generous," laughed Silverman, taking the attention in stride.

"It's funny — I was never asked to be naked in anything until I turned 40 and then I'm asked to be naked in everything — which I kind of love."

In I Smile Back, Sarah Silverman plays a suburban mother struggling with depression. CONTRIBUTED

> **It's funny — I was never asked to be naked in anything until I turned 40 and then I'm asked to be naked in everything — which I kind of love.** Sarah Silverman

NEW CAREER?

'Comedy is who I am'

While Silverman may be enjoying some dramatic success, rest assured she has no plans on becoming a serious actor, saying that she is still addicted to comedy.

"It's my only joy and the bane of my existence," she says.

"It's most magical when you're totally connected to the audience and they are laughing and its rolling. It makes my arms itch with glee — I can't explain it."

"I'm lucky — I'm not into any fancy, expensive things (and) because of that I can do anything I want," said Silverman. "(But) comedy is who I am in my heart and soul so I will always be a comedian."

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FW-44: METRO TORONTO, VANCOUVER, CALGARY, EDMONTON, OTTAWA

THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

What I don't need is Friday Night Lights, the musical. That's right. Scott Porter will play Coach Taylor in an upcoming production

I've watched so much football in the last week that I can pretty much execute a pass rush and an end-around leading to a touchdown all at the same time.

Not like actual football — although I did tune in Sunday night to watch the Grey Cup — but movies about football, which, if we're being honest, are better paced.

I don't know what prompted the football-themed watching, nor do I want to because it would expose to both you and me my elementary stream of consciousness, which I'm guessing is similar to a dog — "Tree, pee, lick butt… squirrel!" We're better off not knowing.

But it started with We Are Marshall. "You've never seen it?" Simon asked of the 2006 movie starring Matthew McConaughey as a new coach who must put a college football team together after an unthinkable tragedy. "And you call yourself a sports movie lover?"

Next was Remember the Titans, the 2000 movie starring Denzel Washington as a new coach who must put a high school football team together after racial segregation ends.

On a roll now, I suggested we watch just the pilot of Friday Night Lights. We've already watched all six seasons but I wanted to revisit Coach Taylor, Tami, Riggins and Saracen, for old time's sake.

After the pilot, we watched one more. But after that, Simon strongly suggested that we stop. "You will never top that episode," he said. "Let's quit while we're ahead."

"Yeah," I said. "You're probably right."

"What are you doing?"

"I can't stop and I won't stop. Is there a love scene in this damn show between Coach Taylor and Tami?" I asked, as I topped up our wine glasses with Tami Taylor-size pours. "Because that is what I need right now."

THE SHOW: Friday Night Lights

THE MEAL: Leftover pot roast

What I don't need is Friday Night Lights, the musical. That's right. Scott Porter, the actor who played Jason Street in the television series, will apparently play Coach Taylor in an upcoming production.

"Whenever I read about non-musical stories being turned into musicals," I told Simon as we sipped our wine on the couch, "I think it's got to be a joke, or an SNL skit. I mean, what's next? Rocky, the musical?"

"Uh, Rocky was a musical," he said.

How can people suspend their disbelief long enough and not be cynical seeing football players singing? Like singing actual songs! That simply does not fit into my narrative of good sports movies. I want conflict, underdogs, tears and training sequences, not song and dance, unless it's in the end zone. That predictability is precisely what keeps me coming back to movies like Rocky, Breaking Away and Hoosiers, because it's comforting to know exactly what you're going to get.

Just like pot roast. But what no bookie would've placed odds on was that after our Sunday night pot roast accompanied by some FNL, we'd have leftovers. Actual leftovers! So on Monday night, with more FNL, we warmed up a baguette and topped it with the leftover roast, slivers of red onion and beautiful, bitter dandelion greens fried up in olive oil, garlic and chillies.

Clear eyes, full stomachs, can't lose.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

MEMORABILIA

Ralphie's Red Ryder comes home for Christmas

A museum dedicated to A Christmas Story has acquired the holy grail of movie memorabilia: a Red Ryder BB gun wielded by Ralphie in the beloved holiday film.

The Cleveland house where exteriors for the 1983 movie were shot already draws thousands of tourists year round. Now visitors to the adjacent museum will get to lay eyes on the Christmas gift Ralphie longed for most of all: the "Red Ryder Carbine Action 200-shot Range Model air rifle with a compass in the stock and this thing which tells time."

Brian Jones, the owner of the house and museum, paid $10,000 for it on an Internet auction site.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Christmas Story's Ralphie. CONTRIBUTED

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Perfecting the role of a psychopath

JESSICA JONES

David Tennant says key to acting is to keep feeling scared

In person, David Tennant has charm aplenty, but nothing like the control freak he plays in the new Netflix series Jessica Jones.

As the villainous Kilgrave, he plagues the show's title character — a lapsed superhero played by Krysten Ritter — with superhuman persuasion. Kilgrave's every wish is Jessica's command.

"There wasn't a massive amount of research I could do to play a mind-controlling psychopath," says Tennant. "At first glance, Kilgrave's power might sound attractive. But what would it really be like to live with?"

Viewers are invited to explore that at their chosen pace, since all 13 episodes of Jessica Jones, based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name, are available for streaming on the Netflix website.

Tennant says he's "properly hooked."

"My character doesn't really get going until episodes five or six or seven," he says. "Not being heavily featured in those early episodes allowed me to join them as a viewer without having to stare at myself."

Kilgrave is only the latest in a stable of varied, vivid characters tackled by the Scottish actor. They include a singing-and-dancing lawman in the TV crime drama Viva Blackpool; the 10th Doctor in the hallowed Dr. Who franchise; Barty Crouch Jr. in the film Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire; and a detective investigating murder in a quiet British village in the hit series Broadchurch (plus the same role in the U.S. version that aired on Fox).

Tennant grew up in a small town outside Glasgow. He was the son of a minister, whose line of work, he notes, entails a certain element of theatre, "so I'm sure that, somehow, watching my father 'perform' must have inspired me."

Shielded by youthful idealism from any recognition that "trying to make a living as an actor is a bloody stupid idea," he was accepted at age 17 to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and has been working since he was 20.

Now a boyish-looking 44, he is asked to explain his acting process. He bursts out laughing, with his insistence that he doesn't have one underscored by the T-shirt he happens to be wearing that proclaims, "Anybody Can Do What I Do."

But then, playing the good sport, he gives it a shot:

"It's a bit like wearing in a pair of shoes," he begins. "You put them on your feet, and at first they squeak and hurt and you can't really walk. But you LIKE these shoes, so you work away at it until the shoes feel comfortable."

He shakes his head and chuckles again: "What am I saying?!"

A model of humility, Tennant counts himself among those actors "just waiting for someone to tap you on the shoulder and go, 'Enough, man! We've all had a laugh. Now it's time to stop pretending you're any good at it.' You exist in a constant sense that you're balancing on some very shaky floorboards and at any time it's going to collapse, and you'll be left looking for a job at Starbucks."

But if that's the case, Tennant's balancing act continues to go well, "and I'm very grateful," he says.

"Within the small range of choice you have as an actor, I do tend toward things I haven't done before. My response is, 'What an unusual thing to be asked to do! I should probably say yes to that.' And I feel very lucky that, thus far, my spectrum of choice has been broad enough to keep things bubbling along.

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David Tennant plays the villainous Kilgrave in the new Netflix series Jessica Jones. CONTRIBUTED

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A not-so rockin' Christmas this year

CHARTS

2015 is drawing to a close with nary a non-pop tune in sight

Alan Cross
For Metro Canada

Notice anything missing from the charts this year? Once you get past The Great Wall of Adele, it's a sea of pop, urban, R&B and country. Anything vaguely rock-related is almost nowhere to be found.

This week, the best-performing rock act in Canada is Rush with their multi-CD R40 live collection at No. 19. Further down, there's Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats (an alt-rock hit) at No. 24, Drones from Muse at No. 31 and City and Colour at No. 34. That's just four rock acts in the Canadian Top 40.

It's even worse in 'Murica: Rush (No. 14), the new Grateful Dead live album (No. 29) and Blurryface from Twenty-One Pilots (No. 40).

And it's not the impact of streaming. There's only one rock-ish act, — X-Ambassadors' Renegades, in the Top 40 on the Canadian streaming charts—and it's at No. 40 the last time I checked. It's also the top streaming rock-ish song in the US, but we don't encounter it until we reach No. 103.

What's going on? A couple of things.

With the exception of Coldplay's A Head Full of Dreams, which is out today (and whether Coldplay can be classified as "rock" is certainly up for debate), there's been a dearth of high-profile rock releases in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Come to think of it, the third quarter was pretty barren, too.

Second, we might be in a transition phase from the pop and melodic post-Mumford & Sons pop-rock of the last couple of years to something harder and heavier. The evidence? The new albums from Justin Bieber and One Direction.

Each of these releases pushed for a more mature sound, an attempt to grow up with their original teen fans.

This cohort of music consumers — and it's a big one — is aging into their late high-school and early college years, a time when people tend to get more serious about their music

Past trends show that as a demographic bubble of teens age, a good portion of them will want something more serious, darker, harder and heavier. Bieber and 1D are trying to harness that, even if just a little. Meanwhile, rock is waiting to embrace these kids.

Another thing about history: music tends to lean heavier when there's both Republican in the White House and a Conservative at 10 Downing Street. We're halfway there — and we have an American election coming in November.

If history is an indicator, things should get more rockin' through 2016 and 2017.

For more, go to AJournalofMusicalThings.com or follow me on twitter at @alancross.

Beside's Coldplay's A Head Full of Dreams, the musical landscape has been pretty rock free lately, but if history is any indication, this will probably change. GETTY IMAGES

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Steer clear of party pitfalls

OFFICE ETIQUETTE

Have a good time without leaving a bad impression

Astrid Van Den Broek

So you know not to drink too much. You know this isn't the time to bust out your best Sweet Caroline on the company stage. You know that you and Chris from accounting shouldn't smooch it up in the corner.

But what etiquette tips are you missing? Here are a few lesser-known ideas on how to behave at this year's company Christmas party.

Tell them you're coming

"I hear from employers a lot that a certain generation of people do not know how to RSVP or choose not to," says Wendy E. Mencel, an etiquette consultant with the Canadian School of Protocol and Etiquette in London, Ont. "It's a huge issue with employees in their 20s."

Make a point of RSVP'ing to your invitation as soon as possible to help your bosses figure out how many canapés they need to order.

Do your homework

Find out what kind of party it is beforehand: a casual gathering at your boss's house? A formal affair at a local restaurant? A beer and wings night at the pub? The location will likely dictate what kind of attire you should plan to wear.

> **Parties aren't a good time to share with people something about your personal life that they wouldn't have know.**
> Wendy E. Mencel
> Etiquette Consultant

Check yourself

OK, you're watching how many glasses of Merlot you're tipping back….but are you keeping track of how many times you've gone back to the chocolate dessert fountain?

"Gorging on food at parties is another concern we hear from employers," says Mencel. "I know of one company who, after your first job interview, they invite you to a cocktail party to see how much you eat, drink and mingle…and then you get the second interview. And this applies to a holiday party. If you spend all your time eating and not mingling, your boss will see it."

Have fun at your holiday party, but don't document every minute of it. SHUTTERSTOCK

Save the shock and awe

In a polyamorous relationship? Got a wife who's 30 years older than you? This isn't the time to share it with the rest of the company.

"This can just bring up a whole bunch of questions that aren't appropriate for that day. Parties aren't a good time to share with people something about your personal life that they wouldn't have known," says Mencel.

Use social media smarts

Before you post anything on social media, gain the consent of those you've photographed.

"And don't ruin your career by taking pictures of your boss and putting it up," Mencel adds. Also don't tweet your way through the party.

Don't be a teacher's pet

Sure it's a good idea to put a face to your name and introduce yourself to the company president. "However it's not the time to talk business or ask for a raise," says Mencel.

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Rock, croon or swing around the Christmas tree

Keith Carman

Holiday-themed albums have always been in vogue. From a fledgling career desperate for a foot in the door to a flailing chart-topper anxious to gain lost ground, everyone knows that belting out a few tracks about the "most wonderful time of the year" can set almost anything straight. Moreover, such efforts tend to warp genre barriers and break down walls.

That said, while the 2015 holiday season does look somewhat light on fresh festive fodder, there are plenty of works available to keep the eggnog flowing. Here are a few timeless classics and unforgettable gems from years gone by, as well as some newer affairs, waiting to find their place in the holiday legacy.

Elvis Presley
Elvis' Christmas album
RCA/Victor

Released at the height of his young career, Elvis' Christmas Album showcases the velvet-voiced crooner's take on Santa Claus Is Back In Town, I'll Be Home For Christmas and of course, Blue Christmas.

Bing Crosby
White Christmas
Decca

The pinnacle of seasonal albums, from it's namesake track (reputedly the best-selling song of all time) through Silent Night and Silver Bells, this 1945 work from "The Old Groaner" is the undisputed Yuletide staple.

LeAnn Rimes
Today Is Christmas
Curb Records

Following up on last year's promise of a holiday trilogy, country icon LeAnn Rimes issues Today Is Christmas, the successor to 2014's One Christmas — Chapter 1. As expected, it's another mash-up of quintessential classics and originals.

Earth, Wind & Fire
The Classic Christmas
Album Legacy Recordings

While reissues generally happen a few years after an album has initially dropped, the popularity of Earth, Wind & Fire's 2014 seasonal offering Holiday was so welcomed, it is being released again this year under the The Classic Christmas Album moniker. Moreover, it's bolstered with an additional five cuts spanning E,W&F's storied legacy.

Various Artists
The Classic Christmas '80s
Album Legacy Recordings

While Christmas albums are all the rage, some artists only end up putting out a song or two. Occasionally, those tunes end up outshining the full-length works of their peers and as this collection of one-offs proves, the '80s were rife with such fun.

A 15-track, all-star affair,The Classic Christmas '80s Album finds Wham! (Last Christmas) And The Bangles (Hazy Shade Of Winter) paired alongside Run-D.M.C. (Christmas In Hollis), Hall & Oates (Jingle Bell Rock), The Pointer Sisters (Santa Claus Is Coming To Town), Bob & Doug McKenzie (Twelve Days Of Christmas), New Kids On The Block (This One's For The Children) and... Fishbone (Slick Nick, You Devil You)? Who could ask for more.

The Carpenters
Christmas Collection
Legacy Recordings

Uniting both Carpenters legendary Christmas albums, Christmas Collection is as awe-inspiring as it is cheery. Thank Karen Carpenter's unforgettable renditions of Ave Maria, Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas, and more.

Rockin' Rudolph
The Brian Setzer
Orchestra
Surfdog Records

Has it really been a decade since original Stray Cat/big beat guru Brian Setzer and his orchestra released a Christmas album? Surprisingly. Upping the ante with Rockin' Rudolph, the crew have a bit of fun with the likes of Yabba-Dabba Yuletide, Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree and 10 more swingin' songs for the season.

The Misfits
Horror Xmas EP

Punk rock icons more associated with Halloween than Christmas, even The Misfits jumped in to the game with limited edition EP Horror Xmas circa 2013. Uniting a cover of Dr. Seuss' You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch with an original work and speedy take on Elvis gem Blue Christmas, this is a fun — albeit rare — seasonal treat.

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Janine Falcon

SCENTS FOR HER

Strong, sexy, sweet, gentle and unexpected, this selection of the best gift-worthy scents speaks to the many facets of the women on your list.

L'Occitane Pierre Hermé Grapefruit Rhubarb

When the chef behind the world's best macarons uses his exceptional senses to create perfume, delightful things happen. This fresh, spicy eau de toilette is lively and sweet without being sugary. $65 at L'Occitane en Provence, ca.loccitane.com.

Etat Libre d'Orange Remarkable People

Warm and sweet with champagne, fruit and spice, this oriental fragrance is for women and men. Give it to your other half with a "let's share" and a wink. $107 at birchbox.ca.

Tory Birch Holiday Cracker and Candle

The fashion designer's signature crisp floral charms with festive wrapping; pair it with the luxurious candle scented with the same fragrance for home. $31 and $72 at Sephora, sephora.ca.

Atelier Cologne Neccessaire Azure Gift Set

Each of the four travel-sized atomizers in this collection is a fragrant escape to the Italian coast, evocative of deep blue sky and sea, and sunny, citrus-scented breezes. $32 at Sephora, sephora.ca.

Nina Ricci L'Extase

Deeply sensual with heady florals, musk, amber and caramel, this oriental is about smooth warm skin and rumpled, 1000-thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets. $95 at Hudson's Bay, thebay.com.

Miu Miu Miu Miu

The first fragrance from Miuccia Prada's Miu Miu label is a bright, alluring floral perfume, youthful and sweet, with a hint of nostalgia. The only thing missing is a display case for its unique and wonderful bottle. $135 at Holt Renfrew, holtrenfrew.com.

Dior J'Adore Touche de Parfum

A new concept for Dior, this intensely floral dabber, anchored with musk and sandalwood, is designed to enhance whatever's spritzed on top... such as Poison or the J'Adore she already owns and loves. $112 at Hudson's Bay, thebay.com.

The Body Shop Black Musk

Fourth in the very successful range that started with White Musk in 1981, this dark and sweet gourmand-rich oriental floods the senses with marzipan, almond, licorice root, black vanilla and black musk. Choose from eau de toilette, eau de parfum and perfume oil — or give her all three. From $25 at The Body Shop, thebodyshop.ca.

Tocca Beauty Eau de Parfum Wardrobe

An enchanting gift set of six enticingly feminine fragrances in utterly adorable, Instagram-worthy mini dabbers, this collection pretty much calls ahead to reserve prime real estate on her vanity. $50 at Sephora, sephora.ca.

Aerin Lauder Rose de Grasse

An opulent, singular floral fragrance lauded (see what we did there?) for its plush, real-life bouquet scent, this gorgeous perfume is ideal for anyone who adores roses. $205 at Estée Lauder, esteelauder.ca

SCENTS FOR HIM

Fragrance is all about personality. Our roundup has one for every guy on your "nice" list — and maybe your "naughty" list too.

Aramis Black

A new urban-man eau de toilette that goes from the office to happy hour, this scent starts with bold, crisp, green leafy notes and gradually develops its aromatic side — juniper wood sweetened with tonka bean and rich cognac, smoky leather and white incense. $64 at Holt Renfrew, holtrenfrew.com.

Floris No. 89

A British scent released in 1951, this is for the well-dressed retro fellow in your life. A traditional woody aromatic with citrus and rose, it finishes with woods, moss and musk. Fun fact: Bond creator Ian Fleming was a fan. $105 at menessentials.ca.

L'Occitane Eau de Cedrat

Could be his Monday-morning best mate, with its eye-opening burst of bright, citrusy bergamot, that soon softens to spicy nutmeg, ginger and smooth, woody notes. $58 at L'Occitane en Provence, ca.loccitane.com.

Prada Luna Rossa Sport

Most "sport" scents are all about invigorating freshness. This eau de toilette is softer, warmer and sweeter, with juniper berries, lavender, vanilla and tonka beans. He'll wear it after the game, for congratulatory cocktails to celebrate his win. $72 at Murale, murale.ca, and Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

The Vagabond Prince Land of Warriors

For old-world warriors on horseback or tatted, modern weekend warriors on bikes — this niche eau de parfum is all about leather, worn-in like a well-loved moto jacket, with notes of rum, woods and tar. $200 at menessentials.ca.

Giorgio Armani Acqua di Gio Profumo

A follow-up to immensely successful sea-and-citrus Acqua di Gio (which debuted almost 20 years ago), this elegant scent is a darker version, with marine and spicy notes that break over patchouli and incense. $109 at Hudson's Bay, thebay.com.

Thierry Mugler A*Men Ultra Zest

Newest in Mugler's lineup of AMen scents, this bold eau de toilette opens with a splash of juicy sweet orange and ginger and develops with coffee notes, cinnamon, pepper, vanilla, patchouli and tonka.

Mugler fans will dig it like dessert. Limited edition, $99 at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca, and Jean Coutu, jean-coutu.com.

Penhaligon's Juniper Sling

For the guy who likes a good early hike followed by a hot toddy to temper the chill, this eau de toilette begins with the freshness of fragrant pine on a crisp morning and warms up with leather, cinnamon and cardamom, plus cherry, sugar and amber for a sweet hit. $195 at menessentials.ca.

Valentino Uomo Edition Noire

The graphic matte black bottle broadcasts the personality of this eau de toilette, a potent oriental fragrance with cedar, hazelnut, leather, chocolate and roasted coffee bean notes. It's dark, sweet and suggestive. $98 at Hudson's Bay, thebay.com.

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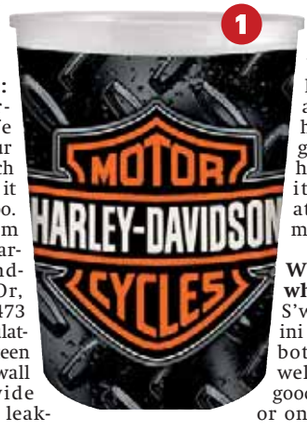
Special gifts for the special people

TEACHERS/COACHES

Thanking those who help shape the lives of your kids

Ylva Van Buuren

Someone once said that a good coach sees in you what you can't see in yourself. If that's how your son or daughter feels about any of their coaches or teachers, suggest you wrap up a gift for them this holiday season. These ideas all get an A+.



For lunch: Plaid thermal carafe will keep your teacher's lunch warm — and it looks good too. $49.95 from Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca. Or, choose the 473 ml/16 oz. insulated Klean Kanteen with double-wall interior, wide mouth, and leak-proof cap. $32.99 at Sporting life, sportinglife.ca.

Wise to you: Everyone loves to decorate for the holidays. This large resin owl will look perfect on the teacher's desk – or just as good on her mantle at home. $34.99 at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.

Under-the-desk decor: Whether your teacher drives a motorcycle or teaches shop, this Harley Davidson Waste Basket will make a fun holiday gift. It will spark conversation too. $19.99 at Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.

Holidays: Chalkboard decorations are a perfect gift for a teacher... they will shine in the classroom or at home as holiday decor. The decorations are reusable and easy to clean — just rinse. From $3.99 to $8.99. at Michaels, michaels.com.

Just for fun: Festive milk bottles all lined up in a row will help anyone get into the holiday spirit. $3 each at Michaels, michaels.com.

Wet your whistle: The S'well Santorini 17 oz. water bottle travels well and looks good at the gym or on the outdoor track. It's available in several colours. $40 at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

Best teacher: Here's to the Best Teacher Ever, even if it is just coffee. $12 at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

Watch me: Pool your money with the rest of the class and outfit your favourite coach with a Fitbit Charge HR Wireless Activity Wristband. It does everything from tracking steps and heart rate to monitoring calories and workout intensity. Syncs to more than 100 leading smartphones. $179.95 at Amazon.ca.

Quiet class: For the teacher who has everything, choose this vintage inspired desk bell. It's a great way to get everyone's attention. $5.99 at Winners, winners.ca.

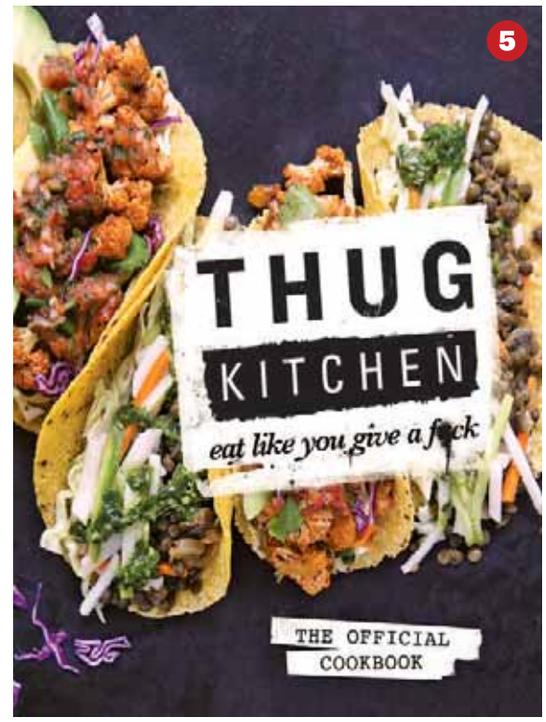
Recess: Everyone needs to chill out... wrap up an Adult Colouring Book for your teacher. $9.99 at HomeSense, homesense.ca.

Warm wishes: For cold outdoor practices, your favourite coaches will appreciate the Pom Beanie ($29.95 at Gap, gapcanada.ca), or cosy ear muffs ($62, Banana Republic, bananarepublic.ca).

Dr. Cool Wrap: Coaches will love the Coolcore Dr. Cool Wrap for sports injuries (or injuries on the job). It combines cold therapy with compression technology to reduce swelling and aid recovery. $24.99 at Sporting Life, sportinglife.ca.

Chalk it up: The ultimate climbing accessory, you can never have too many chalk bags. Wrap up this handy organic chalk bag for your outdoor ed instructor. Waist belt included. $27 at Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), mec.ca.

Go vegan: The Thug Kitchen recipe book is the hottest (most profanity-filled) vegan cookbook going. Share it with a teacher who will understand — and enjoy and make use of it. $31.95 at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.



1 Harley Davidson Waste Basket ($19.99, Canadian Tire)
2 Pom Beanie ($29.95, Gap)
3 Organic chalk bag, with waist belt ($27, MEC)
4 Vintage-inspired desk bell ($5.99, Winners)
5 Thug Kitchen vegan cookbook ($31.95, Indigo stores)
6 Festive milk bottles ($3/each, Michaels)

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Find meaning with gift giving

FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Top tips: Listen up, be unique and find a theme

Astrid Van Den Broek

You finally did it. You've trimmed down your gift-giving list so you're giving out fewer chocolate truffle filled coffee mugs to people you barely know and thus can spend more on those nearest and dear to you.

So what to get when you've got a little bit of cash? How can you pick truly memorable gifts? We asked gift bloggers for their thoughts on selecting the perfect gift.

BE A LISTENER

"Listen closely to the people in your life," says Lindsay Roberts Schey, founder of the blog TheGiftInsider.com. "Many people unintentionally mention things they really want or need or some may drop subtle hints at what they are really hoping for."

If you're not good at listening in, rely on how well you know them and give some thoughts to their interests and hobbies. "There are hundreds of gifts out there associated with even the most obscure hobbies and tastes," says Roberts Schey. "If you find a few smaller items, put them together in a themed gift set because everyone likes to get lots of presents."

Really stumped? "Another gift idea gold mine is a person's Pinterest or personal Facebook page," suggests Marie Anakee Miczak, the blogger behind gavethat.com.

GO FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT

"Try to give experience-based gifts, such as a subscription box service, passes to the movies or a gift card to a local coffee shop," suggests Miczak. After all, don't we all have enough coffee mugs? Make it harmonize by packaging movie gift certificates with a bag of liquorice or some packages of microwave popcorn to hit the theme home, or pair a lovely bath towel set with a bag of scented Epsom salts.

THINK UNIQUE...

... and something that you would like to get.

"The best gifts are the ones that people absolutely love but just wouldn't buy for themselves or would buy for themselves but you found it first," says Lisa Pozin, owner of Giving Gifts in Vancouver.

OR THEMED...

Like books, calendars or sports items. "Start the habit of having "signature gift" for each type of person on your list," says Roberts Schey. "It saves you time and you end up having your own "style" of gift-giving each season."

Also think about grouping items together to complete a theme if you can't find a substantial enough gift to give to someone on your list. Package them in a practical vessel like a chic ice bucket or square vase to complete the look, adds Roberts Schey.

How do you pick your gifts to elicit a response like this? ISTOCK

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TECHNOLOGY

Smartphones offer a little of everything for everyone

Mike Yawney

It should come as no surprise Smartphones continue to be a top holiday gift. With powerful processors, incredible cameras, and hundreds of thousands of apps, they are the gift that keeps on giving.

Here are some of the best smartphones of the holiday season.

iPhone 6s Plus
$1,029 and up

Apple's latest smartphone is unlike any other. With 3D Touch, users can interact with the device in new ways by simply varying the amount pressure applied to the screen. The 12-megapixel camera snaps amazing pictures in a variety of lighting conditions, and users can watch their images come to life with Live Photos, which add movement into every shot you snap. This is also the first iPhone to shoot 4k video (4 times the resolution of HD) with incredible image stabilization.

Nexus 6P
$699

This flagship Android smartphone features Marshmallow, the latest version of Google's operating system. The beautiful 5.7-inch display is housed in a contoured aluminum body with front facing stereo speakers for top-notch audio. A fingerprint sensor keeps the device secure from prying eyes, while the 12-megapixel camera excels at shooting in environments with less than ideal lighting conditions.

BlackBerry Priv
$899

The very first BlackBerry to run Google's Android operating system. This unique smartphone focuses on privacy and productivity. An over-sized screen increases productivity, while the sliding physical keyboard makes it easy to type. Since Priv runs Android, Blackberry users will finally have access to hundreds of thousands of apps, something that has been lacking on BlackBerry devices.

Lumia 950
$749

This first new Windows phone in nearly two years, the Lumia 950 features some high end specs and runs Windows 10 for ultimate productivity.

A 20-megapixel camera blurs the lines between point and shoot cameras and smartphones, plus you can also connect your Lumia 950 to the Microsoft Display Dock and use it with an external monitor, keyboard and mouse just like a full-fledged PC.

Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+
$949

A smartphone with a truly unique design. The stunning 5.7-inch display wraps around the edges for a one-of-a-kind viewing experience. Not only do games and apps look great, the outer edges provide shortcuts to apps and notifications, even when the phone is facedown.

One of the most useful features however has to be the ability to fully charge the phone in 120 minutes.

Motorola Moto G
$230

A budget-friendly smartphone with plenty of features. The quad-core processor means blazing fast speed while using apps, or playing games, and you won't have to search for a plug-in as the battery is designed to last an entire day. The phone is also water resistant in up to three feet of water for up to 30 minutes, giving you peace of mind. You can also customize the colour of your phone with a number of unique shells designed by Motorola.

HTC One A9
$649

This Android smartphone features an edge-to-edge 5-inch high-definition screen, which displays 40 per cent more colour than normal LCD screens. Games and apps not only look good, they sound amazing. Built-in DAC converts 16-bit audio into 24-bit high-resolution sound for added richness and depth, unlike anything you have ever heard before on a smartphone.

1. iPhone 6s Plus, $1,029 and up
2. Nexus 6P, $699
3. BlackBerry Priv, $899
4. Lumia 950, $749
5. Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+, $949
6. Motorola Moto G, $230
7. HTC One A9, $649

All prices are based on the purchase of a phone without a contract.

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Newfoundland's Fogo Island Inn wins enRoute Hotel Design Award for architecture

5 HOT THINGS TO DO IN BARBADOS

This past Monday marked the start of one big, yearlong party in Barbados to celebrate 50 years of independence from Britain — your presence may just be required. Why not start planning your trip now? **DOUG WALLACE** METRO

Frying it up at Oistins Bay Gardens. DOUG WALLACE

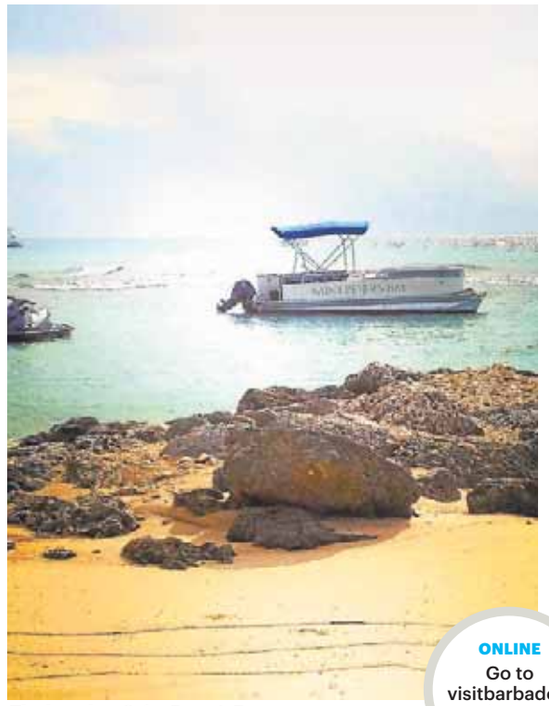
1 Eat local

The street food trucks and rum-shop takeout counters are crowded with locals and tourists for good reason: They harbour some of the most delicious home cooking you will ever taste. The Oistins fish fry is a Friday-night highlight, with dozens of market stalls sizzling with goodness. And the lineups at Cuz's Fish Stand in the Garrison in Bridgetown are so healthy on weekdays, he takes the weekend off.

Mount Gay is the world's oldest rum brand. DOUG WALLACE

2 Try the rum

Barbados is by all accounts the birthplace of rum. Mega-distiller Mount Gay dates back to 1703, when it was discovered that the molasses they had been discarding after processing the sugar cane fermented quite nicely. Traditional rum "shops," roadside one-room bars where people gather to watch cricket and play dominos, are scattered throughout Barbados. Don't be afraid to belly up for a rum punch or a Banks beer.



The beach at Saint Peter's Bay. CONTRIBUTED

ONLINE
Go to visitbarbados.org for more.

3 Head to the beach

The west and south coasts offer one beach of finely ground coral sand after another — take your pick. Then take a catamaran cruise, go kayaking or paddle-boarding, or just sit on a lounger and enjoy the million different shades of blue. There are also dozens of dive sites to sink your mask into, with Barbados Blue at Needham's Point Pebbles Beach being the dive shop of choice — an excellent launching point for shipwrecks in Carlisle Bay.

Roiling surf at Bathsheba Bay. DOUG WALLACE

4 Catch a wave

The easygoing east side of Barbados is where locals go to relax on the weekend — or surf. A day trip to the rugged Atlantic coastline of Bathsheba will reveal stunning views, plus a few hints of the island's colonial past, particularly if you venture into the Atlantis Hotel, which dates back to the 1880s. Make a pit stop on the patio before taking a hike along the old railway tracks to watch the surfers at the Soup Bowl, a world-famous reef break.

5 Cheer on the ponies

Watch local and international polo matches. DOUG WALLACE

When the beach gets boring, head to the sports pitch. Cricket isn't the only game in town, either. The popularity of polo in Barbados reaches back to the island's colonial roots, the first match being played in 1884. The Polo Club regulates four playing fields, welcoming international teams in a season that runs from January through May. Prince Charles and Prince Harry have both played polo here many times.

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Panama on the cusp of shining brightly

ON THE MOVE

A wild rafting tour just one way to see this lively country

Loren Christie
For Metro Canada

On Day 4 of a G Adventures trip to Panama a protest over government infrastructure projects by the local indigenous people forced our group of 15 intrepid travellers off the bus and into the heat for almost two hours.

Happily a nearby store, equipped with basic bathrooms guarded by chickens, sold us some beers to enjoy while we waited it out. The experience was a little uncomfortable but charmingly genuine and typical of what to expect when travelling in Panama, Central America's diamond in the rough.

Boquete offers limited services in terms of restaurants and hotels but is doing an admirable job staking its claim as Panama's adventure capital. Located close to the Costa Rican border, the town is set within a lush mountain valley dotted with coffee plantations and offers travellers a variety of hard and soft experiences from zip-lining and horseback riding to a variety of hikes including an overnight journey up an extinct volcano.

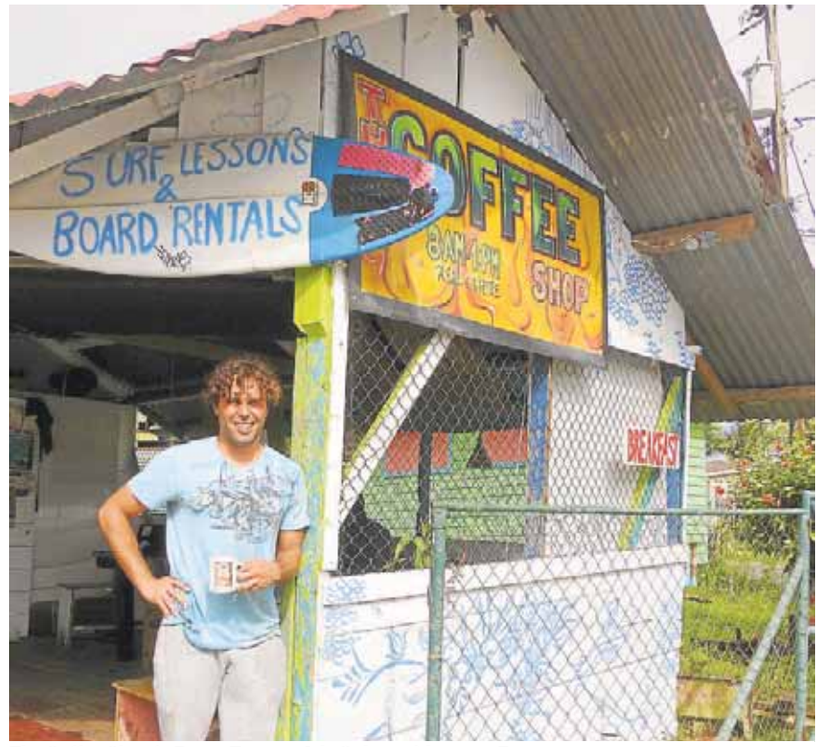
UNESCO-protected Casco Viejo is what I suspect Havana will look like in 10 years.

I took a whitewater rafting tour through some intimidating rapids that saw my 200-pound raft mate swept over the side! While I was definitely thankful for our fearless guide, Tini, I was more thankful to have the river to ourselves; we did not see one other raft during our four-hour excursion.

Our destination on Day 4 was Bocas Del Toro, a collection of beautiful palm tree-covered islands that are mostly populated by surfboard-toting backpackers. The only town of any size, Bocas Town, is mostly made up of hostels and waterfront bars and exudes a laid-back charm. Chatting over morning coffee at The Coffee Shop with owner and self-professed soul surfer Ernesto Velasquez was as much a highlight as spotting baby dolphins and sloths on a boat trip to Coral Cay.

Panama City's UNESCO-protected Casco Viejo is what I suspect Havana will look like in 10 years if the Cuban capital receives the predicted influx of American cash. The formerly derelict colonial buildings in the Panamanian capital are well into the process of being restored to their former grandeur. Many are already home to funky bars, incredible restaurants and shops.

I ate my last dinner at The Fish Market, a pop-up food truck parked in the middle of the crumbling walls and columns of a yet-to-be-reclaimed building. The white wine was terrible, the fish tacos were good, but the energy I felt from a place that is truly on the cusp of shining brightly was infectious.



The Coffee Shop in Bocas Town on Isla Colon, with owner Ernesto. PETER REMUS

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TRAVEL NOTES REMOTE FISHING, NEW YORK DEAL

Luxury angling
Frontiers International Travel has just opened Astove Atoll Lodge, a fly-fishing paradise on this remote island formation in the southern Seychelles. With six en-suite single rooms, it will be open eight weeks in the spring and six weeks in the fall, with seven-night packages, flying you in and out of Mahé. No more made-up fish tales for you. Visit FrontiersTravel.com/Astove-Island-Lodge.

Astove Atoll has the world's best fishing. CONTRIBUTED

Holiday in NYC
This may not seem like a deal, but it is. The two Gansevoort Hotels in New York (Meatpacking and Park Avenue) are offering a Get Merry holiday package that includes accommodation, passes for skating at Bryant Park, breakfast for two at either The Chester or Ristorante Asellina, welcome gifties and two three-day Metro passes. The perfect winter urban escape. From $600. Visit Gansevoorthotelgroup.com.

Gansevoort Meatpacking NYC. CONTRIBUTED

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DOUG WALLACE

Sometimes, disruption insurance is worth it. ROSS PARMLY

MICHIGAN

Five reasons to visit Detroit right now

Melissa Dunne
For Metro Canada

Motor City makes its comeback

The Detroit waterfront as seen from Windsor, Ont. PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Back in 2013 everyone was talking about Detroit filing for the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. More than two years later the gritty city is undergoing a revitalization driven by a mix of bright-eyed, bushy-tailed hipsters and old-school, laid-back Detroiters. The Motor City is motoring along as it very slowly, but surely, rises from the ashes of bankruptcy with lots for Canadian tourists to see and do this winter.

1 Cheers!

Metro Detroit has a growing craft beer scene, with more than 30 brewpubs making Eater.com's list of where to drink in The D. One of the best places to try a bunch of local brews at once is the Grand Trunk Pub. The building in the heart of the city used to be a jewelry store when it first opened in 1879 and became a ticket office for the Grand Trunk Railway in 1910.

It's been a bar since 1935 and offers more than 170 bottle craft beers throughout the year. Opt for one of the many Michigan-brewed craft beers on tap, such as Bell's Brewery's Two Hearted Ale ($5.50 US for a pint).

2 It's (sort of) the New Brooklyn

The hometown of Ford's Model T is now home to places like Detroit Bikes and Shinola, whose Muhammad Ali Limited Edition Arrow bicycles start at $1,200 US. In certain areas there's been an influx of people who wear plaid shirts, thick glasses and rugged hiking boots whilst biking to an indie coffee shop (such as the admittedly excellent Astro Coffee) for a flat white.

While there have been several news stories seriously asking if it's the New Brooklyn, that's seriously a stretch. But, some hip neighbourhoods, like Corktown and Midtown, are quickly becoming gentrified, so best come see them now before they lose all of their original character.

3 Say Yes to Michigan!

Detroit is now out of bankruptcy, but is currently the poorest big city in America — with a shocking 39.3 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. Like the old tourism slogan that is now found on many a hipster T-shirt "Say Yes to Michigan!" by visiting and supporting the local economy.

The birthplace of Motown Records is also the birthplace of White Stripes frontman Jack White, who just opened an outpost of Third Man Records in the so-hip-it-hurts Cass Corridor neighbourhood. Make time to visit the Motown Museum, a.k.a. Hitsville U.S.A., for an exuberant tour looking back at Detroit's uplifting musical history.

Slows BBQ in Corktown has a perpetual waiting list.

4 A winter wonderland

Be warned, Detroit is called the Motor City for a reason: The public transportation is not up to snuff and you will need a car to get around. You'll be able to park your car in the core for a few dollars while you glide around on the skating rink at Campus Martius Park. The park area also features a twinkling Christmas tree and rink-side bar this time of year. You can then head up the I-96 to the scenic Ann Arbor, Mich., area where there are a bevy of nearby places to see rural Michigan via cross-country skis or snowshoes.

5 Foodie heaven

Detroit has a great (and growing) foodie scene. To get a real sense of all the local food and produce drive over to the Eastern Market, which runs year-round every Saturday from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. After checking out the sprawling market area, drive back to Corktown for dinner at Slows BBQ. The popular rib joint pretty much always has a waiting list of people waiting to dig into the finger-lickin' good ribs and fixins, such as mac-and-cheese, corn bread and beans. If you're looking for something more refined you only have to walk a few steps away for Gold Cash Gold, which has a rotating menu of seasonal foods likely for less gold cash gold than you'd anticipate.

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Lights beckon in Lower Manhattan

NEW YORK

'Mood ring' museum among new draws in neighbourhood

On a dark December night, a canopy of lights glitters across Lower Manhattan, and not just from One World Trade and the other downtown skyscrapers. The neighbourhood sparkles with new attractions, from the otherworldly glow of the SeaGlass carousel in Battery Park to a colorful, choreographed light show called Luminaries at the Winter Garden.

You'll also find upscale shopping, outdoor art, 22 hotels and many dining options. Here are some details.

Several globes from the Cool Globes public art installation in Lower Manhattan, with One World Trade in the background. PHOTOS BY BETH J. HARPAZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SeaGlass Carousel

The SeaGlass Carousel is unlike any merry-go-round you've ever ridden. No toothy wooden horses and vintage organ music here. Instead, the glowing, pastel seats are shaped like seashells that spin and weave while a soaring, dreamlike soundtrack plays. The attraction is located in Battery Park at the tip of Lower Manhattan, a short walk from the boats to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The Staten Island Ferry terminal is nearby as well, with free trips across New York Harbor 24 hours a day.

Pier A

Not far from the carousel heading west along the waterfront is Pier A Harbor House, a landmark building that dates to 1886. It now houses several dining options, with lovely views of the water on one side and on the other side, the skyscraper canyons of the financial district — increasingly known as FiDi — highlighted by One World Trade. Menus range from fun pub fare to oysters, lobster and other seafood. A plaza surrounding the building entrance is dotted with 12 large, colourful Cool Globes. The globes are a public art installation on view until April, designed to raise awareness about global warming.

A cheese display at Le District, a French food hall at the World Financial Center.

World Financial Center

This building just west of One World Trade on the Hudson River offers shopping, food and a respite from the hustle and bustle of the streets outside. Enter at Brookfield Place and check out the upscale retailers, from Gucci and Ferragamo to Diane von Furstenberg and Michael Kors. Then make your way to the Winter Garden, a vaulted glass atrium 10 storeys high. New for the holiday season, through Jan. 10, is Luminaries, a free, colourful, hypnotic light installation that bathes the atrium in a choreographed palette of moody blues, lavenders and other hues from 650 hanging lanterns.

Also onsite is Le District, a French food hall where you'll find crepes, coffee, cheese, sandwiches, fresh produce, flowers and more. And until Dec. 15, just outside Brookfield on the waterfront is a free interactive exhibit called the Museum of Feelings, billed as a "mood ring of the city" that changes colours based on visitors' emotions. Be prepared for long lines to enter the museum.

One World Trade

A visit to the serene and moving 9/11 Memorial park adjacent to One World Trade is a must for any trip to New York City. Other options for visitors include the 9/11 museum and the tower observatory.

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Cavaliers guard Kyrie Irving, who broke his left kneecap during Game 2 of the NBA Finals last season, has been fully cleared to practise

MAPLE LEAFS RUNNING WILD IN MINNESOTA Maple Leafs goaltender James Reimer pounces on a puck as the Wild's Zach Parise barrels in on Thursday night in St. Paul, Minn. Go to metronews.ca for the story. JIM MONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bernier left with no excuses in minors

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Adam Proteau
FOR METRO

The Maple Leafs are striving for game-to-game consistency, but as he attempts to battle out of the worst slump of his six-year NHL career, goalie Jonathan Bernier is searching for minute-to-minute, save-to-save consistency. That's why the affable 27-year-old, to his credit, willingly accepted a 10-day conditioning assignment to the AHL's Toronto Marlies Wednesday.

Bernier knows full well head coach Mike Babcock can't justify putting him back in net every night to work out his tactical and/or confidence issues. He also knows that, in hockey-crazed Toronto, an AHL stint allows him to improve out of the spotlight that accompanies the Leafs wherever they go.

And perhaps the best news is, he'll be doing so on a Marlies squad with enough skill, depth and talent to help him out.

Goalie Jonathan Bernier practised with the Marlies on Thursday. TODD KOROL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The Marlies lost their past two games heading into Friday's road tilt against Rochester, but remained atop the AHL's North Division standings with a 15-5-1-0 record. The Atlantic Division's Wilkes-Barre Penguins (16-2-0-0) are the only team in the league with more points, and although the Marlies aren't a defensive powerhouse, they've won thanks to a stunningly productive offence that's averaged nearly four goals per game.

All of which is to say Bernier has no excuses down on the farm. The 10-day conditioning stretch could see him playing as many as four of the five games scheduled in that span — including the Marlies' second game of the year at Air Canada Centre this Sunday — and he'll need to get his act together in relatively short order before returning to the NHL.

Bernier lost his job as the Leafs' starting goalie to James Reimer earlier this season, and if rookie Garret Sparks makes a positive impression in the week to come, Bernier will have tough competition just to retain the backup role. Of course, his two-year, $8.3-million contract (that still has a year to go) gives him some leeway with which to work, but even on a rebuilding team like the Leafs, that doesn't guarantee him anything in terms of on-ice opportunity. If he can't turn his game around, a buyout of that final contract year is a possibility.

For now, though, Leafs management isn't considering that avenue. They hope Bernier will bounce back, the same way Reimer did after struggling mightily in recent years. Should that happen, he'll be a much more attractive trade asset.

And if it doesn't, Bernier can't say he wasn't afforded every chance to right his own ship.

> **Bernier knows full well head coach Mike Babcock can't justify putting him back in net every night to work out his tactical and/or confidence issues.**

Jays hire new GM

MLB

President Shapiro brings Atkins over from Indians

Just in time for Major League Baseball's annual winter meetings, Blue Jays president Mark Shapiro has hired his new general manager, poaching Ross Atkins from the Cleveland Indians.

The 42-year-old North Carolina native becomes the seventh GM in Jays history, replacing Alex Anthopoulos, who opted to walk away at the end of this past season rather than work with less autonomy under a new boss.

But that should pose no problem for Atkins, Cleveland's vice-president of player personnel, who has spent his entire professional career with the Indians, most of it working under Shapiro.

Atkins was actually drafted by the organization in 1995 as a pitcher out of Wake Forest University. But after five middling seasons in Cleveland's minor-league system — he never made it above Double-A — he transitioned into player development. Under the supervision of Shapiro, who was Cleveland's general manager from 2001 to 2010, Atkins climbed the organizational ranks to eventually become head of the farm system, which he ran from 2007 until last season, when he earned his promotion to vice-president.

Tony LaCava, the Jays' longtime assistant GM who has been serving as interim GM since Anthopoulos's abrupt departure, was a finalist for the job. The 54-year-old, who has been with the Jays for 13 years and served as the top lieutenant to both Anthopoulos and J.P. Ricciardi, will return to his previous role as assistant GM. He also receives a title promotion to senior vice-president of baseball operations.

Ross Atkins THE PLAIN DEALER FILE

Atkins, who also interviewed for the L.A. Angels and Philadelphia Phillies GM vacancies this year, is a first-time GM.

While the Indians lost more games than they won and made the playoffs just three times in the 15 years that Shapiro was president or GM, the organization is highly regarded for its development of homegrown players, for which Atkins would have played a key role. The likes of Jason Kipnis, Danny Salazar and this year's runner-up for American League rookie of the year, Francisco Lindor, were all drafted and developed by the organization. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INTRODUCTION
Atkins will be formally introduced at a news conference on Friday.

NAVARRO SNAGS DEAL WITH CHISOX

The Blue Jays are in the market for a new backup catcher after free-agent backstop Dioner Navarro reportedly signed a one-year deal with the Chicago White Sox on Thursday.

The deal, which hasn't been officially announced by the club, is pending a physical, according to Fox Sports' Ken Rosenthal.

Navarro, 31, spent two seasons in Toronto after signing an $8-million contract in 2013 to replace J.P. Arencibia. He was the Jays' starting catcher in 2014, but was relegated to backup duty after the team signed Russell Martin a year ago.

In 193 games with the Jays over two seasons, the portly and genial switch hitter batted .267 with 17 homers.

History woven into all-star game jerseys

TORONTO 2016

NBA's biggest names will get to carry T.O. on their shoulders

This season's NBA all-stars will play in jerseys that both pay homage to Toronto's NBA history, and celebrate the game's first appearance in Canada.

The NBA and Adidas unveiled the jerseys on Wednesday, for all-star weekend Feb. 13-14 in Toronto.

Among the unique design elements, the font for the jersey's name and number is identical to that worn in 1946, when the Toronto Huskies hosted the New York Knickerbockers in the league's inaugural game.

"This is the first NBA all-star game to be played outside the United States, and it is a very exciting time for basketball in Canada," said Chris Grancio, global basketball manager for Adidas.

The Toronto cityscape features on all-star jerseys. ADIDAS

"To honour this global celebration and pay tribute to Toronto — the site of the NBA's first game — we've incorporated design elements that are inspired by the city's basketball history, sports culture and unique fashion scene. . ."

The all-star game also celebrates the 125th anniversary of the invention of the game by James Naismith.

The jerseys have a subtle maple leaf created by dots on the front of the jersey, and the Toronto cityscape is represented in a colour contrast on the back.

The host Raptors have a presence in the dinosaur claw on the black-and-gold jersey tag.

The inside neck of the jerseys and the drawstring on the shorts is a mosaic of colours — a nod to the international growth of the game.

"In addition to the game being in Canada, it's also outside of the U.S., so the NBA is very cognizant of how basketball and the NBA has become a very global game," said David Cho, the NBA partnership director, for Adidas' basketball marketing.

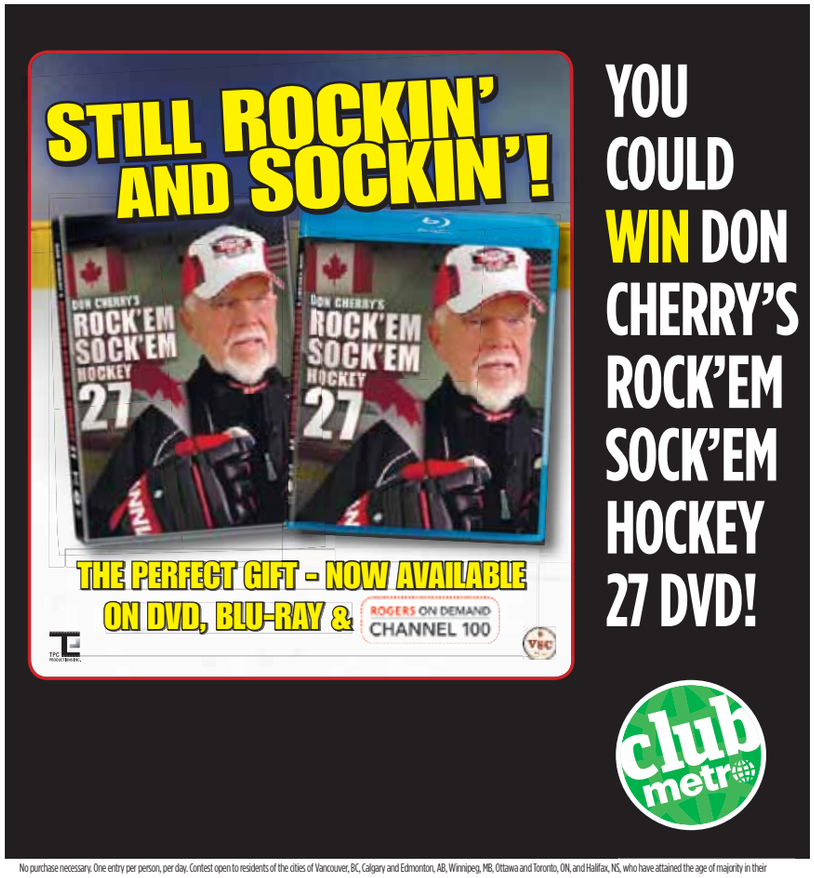
"The league is very proud of that fact, so they wanted to incorporate that story into all of the colours of all the flags of the players represented in the all-star game."

The all-star game balloting begins Dec. 10. THE CANADIAN PRESS

PAST, FUTURE

Since the first all-star game took place at Boston Garden in 1951, New York City has hosted the most, with five. The 2017 meeting of East and West will take place at the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, NC.

RAPTORS ROZAN AND FALLING In spite of DeMar DeRozan's best efforts, the Raptors were brought down to earth by the Nuggets, losing a heart-breaker 106-105 at the Air Canada Centre on Thursday. DeRozan had a game-high 34 points as Denver's Will Barton scored 22. RON TURENNE/GETTY IMAGES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GOLF

Woods opens up on family and future

Tiger Woods says he has a "fantastic" relationship with his ex-wife and he has taken steps to explain to his two children what happened to their marriage.

In a rare and extensive interview with Time magazine, Woods said still wants to play golf at the highest level, though he is resigned that it might not happen if the nerve damage in his back doesn't allow for it.

Woods, who turns 40 on Dec. 30, says he has told eight-year-old Sam and six-year-old Charlie that his parents don't live in the same house because "Daddy made some mistakes."

"I just want them to understand before they get to the Internet age and they log on to something or have their friends tell them something," Woods said. "I want it to come from me so that when they come of age, I'll tell them the real story."

The former world No. 1 had surgery to alleviate a pinched nerve the week before the 2014 Masters and has had two more procedures in the same spot over the last three months.

"One, I don't want to have another procedure," Woods told Time. "And two, even if I don't come back and I don't play again, I still want to have a quality of life with my kids. I started to lose that with the other surgeries." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger Woods last played in August at the Wyndham Championship in which he tied for 10th. KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

ARGOS

Two more years as Ray extends his tenure in blue

The Toronto Argonauts and 36-year-old quarterback Ricky Ray have reached a contract agreement that will keep Ray in Double Blue for two more seasons. Financial terms in the two-year deal were not revealed.

Ray, a 13-year CFL veteran who has been in Toronto since 2012, was set to become a free agent on Feb. 9. While the dollar figure was not released, it's said to be structured to leave enough cap room to re-sign QB Trevor Harris as well. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Stubler comes over from Stamps to help Argos' D

The Toronto Argonauts have named veteran coach Rich Stubler defensive co-ordinator, marking his third stint with the CFL club. Stubler comes from Calgary, where he held the same title with the Stampeders. He replaces Casey Creehan, whose contract was not renewed.

"Rich Stubler is a veteran coach who is an excellent defensive strategist," Argonauts head coach Scott Milanovich said in a statement Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pistorius guilty of murder after appeal

TRIAL

Athlete initially imprisoned on lesser charge of manslaughter

Oscar Pistorius was convicted of murder on Thursday by a South African appeals court that described the once-glittering story of the double-amputee Olympian and Reeva Steenkamp, the girlfriend he killed in his home in 2013, as "a human tragedy of Shakespearean proportions."

The Supreme Court of Appeal overturned a lower court's conviction on the less serious charge of manslaughter, adding another twist to a case that riveted people around the world because of its gripping saga of a celebrity athlete's plunge from grace by his own hand.

"The accused ought to have been found guilty of murder on the basis that he had fired the fatal shots with criminal intent," Justice Lorimer Eric Leach said in the courtroom in Blomefontein, as Steenkamp's mother, June, sat impassively. Pistorius was not there.

Oscar Pistorius is currently under house arrest. GETTY IMAGES

The murder conviction means Pistorius will almost certainly go back to jail, where he spent one year of a five-year prison sentence before being put under house arrest at his uncle's mansion in Pretoria in October. The minimum sentence for murder in South Africa is 15 years, but exceptional circumstances in the case of the former track star, including time already served, his disability and status as a first-time offender, could mean he'll get a lower sentence.

Sentencing is up to the North Gauteng High Court, where Pistorius was tried. South African media said Judge Thokozile Masipa, who presided over the original trial, will handle the matter. No sentencing date has been set.

Reeva Steenkamp GETTY IMAGES

The National Prosecuting Authority will wait for word from the trial court about possible sentencing dates, said Luvuyo Mfaku, a spokesman for the authority.

Pistorius, a multiple Paralympic champion, became the first amputee to run at the Olympics and the able-bodied world championships. He was known as "Blade Runner" for his carbon-fiber running blades.

"This case involves a human tragedy of Shakespearean proportions," Leach said while delivering the ruling on behalf of the five-judge appeals court.

"A young man overcomes huge physical disabilities to reach Olympian heights as an athlete," he said. "In doing so he becomes an international celebrity. He meets a young woman of great natural beauty and a successful model. Romance blossoms and then ironically, on Valentine's Day, all is destroyed when he takes her life."

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RECIPE Mini Lamb Burgers

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Celebrate making it to Friday with delicious burgers with big flavour.

Ready in
Prep time: 25 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 lb ground lamb
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely minced
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp cumin
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 English cucumber, seeded and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 8 to 10 mini pitas
- Lettuce leaves, washed and torn
- Tomatoes, sliced

Directions
1. In a large bowl, mix together lamb, onion, parsley and spices and combine well. Cover and place in the fridge.
2. In a medium sized bowl, mix cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, mint, garlic and salt and pepper and stir.
3. Take meat out of the fridge and form 8 to 10 small patties. Place them on a clean plate. Heat your grill or pan to medium, medium-high heat and add a bit of vegetable oil. Cook your burgers, about 5 minutes on each side until the internal temperature is 160 F. Work in batches so you don't over crowd the pan.
4. Cut each pita in half and tuck in a lamb patty, some lettuce, tomato and a good dollop of the tzatziki-ish sauce.

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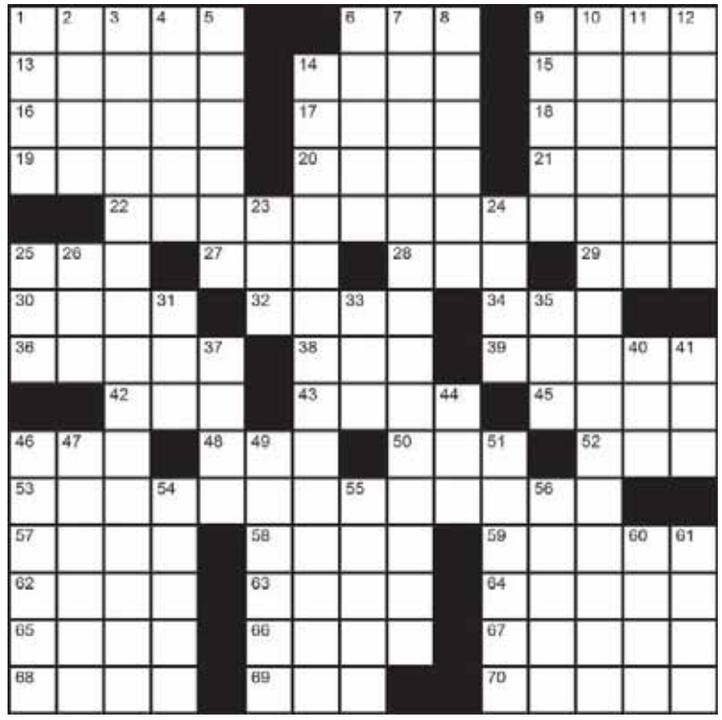
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Flapjacks flavouring's flavour
6. "I Am Legend" (2007) star ...his initials-sharers
9. Sniffy state
13. Another time
14. Nightclub in a Barry Manilow hit, briefly
15. "Be _ _!" (Help out!)
16. Go-_ (Fun vehicles)
17. Throughout
18. Alphabet sequence
19. Prefix to 'dontist' (Braces giver)
20. Nasty
21. Nero's 651
22. Manager of the same-named band, as per #3-Down: 2 wds.
25. Numerical prefix
27. Moviedom's Melissa
28. Consume
29. '70s records
30. Actress Cheryl
32. Intermission, _'acte
34. Diminutive
36. Pre-university Quebec school
38. WWII soldiers
39. Ms. Spelling's
42. Farm animal
43. 'Opal' suffix
45. Ms. Campbell
46. Clod
48. Moulder
50. "Papa-_-Mow-Mow"
52. No. to call
53. Invading naval fleet defeated by England in 1588: 2 wds.
57. Bloody prefix
58. Violinist, Hilary _
59. Blown snow formation
62. Botanical leaf-to-stem angle
63. Fencer's need
64. One distributing things, say
65. Sound
66. On _ _ with (Equal to)
67. Christmas poem bit: "...not _ _ mouse."
68. "...so long _ _ both shall live?"
69. Director Mr. Pollack, briefly
70. Not like The Fonz

DOWN
1. Shark variety
2. Food thickener
3. 1970s music-themed sitcom, with The: 2 wds.
4. Willowy
5. Spiritualize
6. Fabricated on a loom
7. Canada's legendary opinion-giving video booth: 2 wds.
8. Ontario city on Lake Huron where #51-Down was born
9. _ _ (The first letter of Calgary, compared to the first letter of Celine)
10. Holt Renfrew, for example: 2 wds.
11. Boxer's injury: 2 wds.
12. Liquids
14. Theme song for #3-Down: 4 wds.
23. Hive denizen
24. Food package abbr.: 2 wds.
25. "Say Yes to the Dress" network
26. 'After It All': Current album by folk rock group Delta _
31. Lawn's morning blanket
33. Christmas-y contraction
35. Geological period
37. Prefix to 'scope'
40. 'Excess' suffix
41. _ et poivre
44. Last day in December, e.g.
46. City on Lake Ontario east of Toronto
47. Highest points
49. Milo of "Romeo and Juliet" (1968), and surnamesakes
51. Dave _ (Canadian-born actor who portrayed #22-Across)
54. _ prosequi (Not proceeding, in law)
55. Onward
56. Took the car
60. Deflect/protect
61. Restaurant order holder

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You may have suspicions about someone's motives but don't go public with them. Even if you're right it will look like you are being vindictive. Your reputation could suffer most.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Be careful with cash because you could easily make a costly mistake. What seems like a good idea now may turn out to be anything but later on, so err on the side of caution.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
No matter how well intentioned your words may be others are sure to take them the wrong way, so be careful what you say. Tomorrow everything will be back to normal and everyone will be on your side again.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You may struggle to stay on top of your workload but the deadlines you've set are unnecessary — no one will think less of you if you fail to meet them.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Creatively and romantically there is potential but today's Mercury-Jupiter link could tempt you to go too far. Don't start anything you may not be able to finish and don't make promises you may not be able to keep.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Disruption is inevitable today. Whatever happens, keep telling yourself that it's not as bad as it seems and keep your emotions in check. It's not worth getting worked up about.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Don't make hasty decisions, especially if you like to make social and travel plans on the spur of the moment. What seems like such a good idea now may seem very different by this time tomorrow.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may feel out of your depth and you may be tempted to give up but if you do you will regret it in a matter of days. Hang in there.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You may be rather emotional, even if you are the kind of Sagittarius who usually treats life as one big joke. Once in a while though it is good to let it all out, so make a noise if you have to. You will feel better for it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may not be the type to make changes once you've made up your mind about something but you may not have a choice today. You are not in control of events — events are in control of you.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Usually you don't care if others disapprove of what you're doing but if you're smart you'll make an effort to care. No matter how self-reliant — make an effort to work with others.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You may not be able to control what happens but you can control the way you react. The more others try to mess with you the more you must strive to stay serene.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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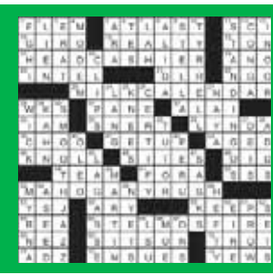

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1	2	9	8	3	5	4	7	6
6	5	4	1	7	2	3	8	9

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